Introduction

My anti-German instinct

First, I'd like to talk about my deeply anti-German instinct 1 .

I was born on April 20, 1868, in Provence, in Martigues (Bouches-du-Rhône), a little over two years before the 1870 war, a long way from its theater, but the repercussions were immense in and around me.

All my regular readers know that the memories of my early childhood go back a long way. I'm sure I'm not being fooled by any mirage here. I can still see the portraits of the Emperor, the Empress and the Little Prince in my father's study. It could only have been before the month of May 1871, when I was taken to the countryside; on my return, after Quatre-Septembre, I don't see these portraits again. On the way back, I vividly remember crossing Marseille on a day when there was a riot on the Plaine Saint-Michel; my father had rushed to Roquevaire to pick up my mother and me, so that we'd all be together in case of trouble. In the weeks that followed, I saw my father bringing back the bad dispatches from the Mairie, and my father and mother, forehead to forehead and teary-eyed, following the progress of the invasion on the map in a brown atlas I called "Le Live des Pussiens".

Beyond the canal, on the Cours, I see the national guard on drill, commanded by my godfather, the professor of hydrography, and whose bugler was my father's clerk, named Corneille.

A little later, at home, I saw the mobile troops being taken aboard to suppress the Algerian insurrection, and I saw myself touching with respect the shakos, the gibernes and the untied belts.

These memories have obsessed me. They're the only sad things about my childhood, which was surrounded, turbulent and cheerful. This corner is the only one that was veiled by a pancake that weighed on my whole life. In 1943, in front of the German sentries with their rifles pointed at our bridges, I said to my fellow citizens:

- The nightmare of my life has come true. I've always feared that they would come to Provence, even to Martigues.

The antagonism between the French and the Germans dominated my youth.

In the most peaceful families, no youngster was given a tin saber that wasn't destined to plant the French flag on the walls of Berlin.

When I arrived in Aix to start my eighth year, it was love at first sight to learn that my teacher was going to be a Lorrain, the brother-in-law of Abbé Wetterlé, who would later come to supervise our studies and playgrounds for a few months.

Lorrainers! And who had opted for France!...

In the house where we had rented the second floor, a family from Metz, refugees for the same reason, lived on the second and third. Their contact moved us by the dignity of the home, its charming and simple cheerfulness, its religious and national spirit, its ardent loyalty to the lost paradise. The old father, the old mother, their daughter, their son, resembled each other in the same way; you had to see them together, one day between the other, grave, sombre, commemorating the surrender of their beautiful, inviolate city; a certain mysterious object, wrapped in precious cloth, would be drawn from a small box and respectfully unshackled; a piece of "siege bread" would appear, all black. After six, seven years, it had become harder than stone. The sacred relic! It was taken in hand, each one greeted and caressed it, the women with tears, the men with the hard accent of a look full of faith. ... For all the years that followed, on our staircase, during military leave, there was the same cheerful clash of sabers against the spurs of Saint-Cyr or Polytechnique, announcing the future of our sons, all officers.

I was destined for the École Navale. Deafened at fourteen, I had to give it up. The hardest part, I remember, was leaving behind my old dream of going to cannon some German port and hunt down, in the North Sea or the Baltic, that entrance to the Kiel Canal that was beginning to be built with the billions of our compensation!

Around 1882, when Jules Ferry advised us not to hypnotize ourselves over "the blue line of the Vosges", it was a scandal that teenagers of my age felt very keenly. Although they lived by the sea, they were against colonial policy, in favor of a policy of retreat, with a view to regaining lost provinces. Alsace-Lorraine above all! That was the general slogan.

I took this moral baggage with me to Paris.

In Paris

I published a number of volumes of prose and verse, critical, literary and philosophical essays, political and social studies, from which a Dictionnaire politique et critique in five large octavos has been drawn, and the article "Allemagne" can be read with great interest.

Among other works, several are devoted almost entirely to Franco-German relations: Kiel et Tanger, Quand les Français ne s'aimaient pas, Devant l'Allemagne éternel le. Two years ago, in Provence, I published Sans la murail le des cyprès, an allegory of the necessary rampart of the Patrie.

In 1888, I was eighteen. It was Boulangerism. As long as Boulanger is just a demagogic, radicalizing soldier, I'm anti. When he took on the popular persona of Général Revanche, I became a boulangiste, and, as a young writer, I joined my friend Maurice Barrès, who had already declared his support in 1888. I was twenty years old. In 1889, it's election time. I came of age. Although anti-Semitic, I vote for the Jewish candidate Naquet.

From the time of my first political articles, I often quoted Robert de Bonnières' remarkable formula2 that "the idea of revenge has long held the role of a Queen of France", in the sense that it maintains the political unity of the Nation, unites citizens, imposes itself on all parties, and makes (or made) military credits voted unanimously. I've quoted the phrase so often that it's sometimes been attributed to me, although I've almost always accompanied it with the author's name or put it in quotation marks. A revenge party seemed to me, in 1940, to be the guarantee of all French revenge. When Laval and Déat insulted this idea, I automatically reacted against them.

In 1894, Barrès founded La Cocarde. I was his right-hand man. Needless to say, I collaborated with him and the socialist Gabriel, deputy of Nancy. The sentiments of these easterners corresponded exactly to my own.

In fact, my entire political life has been in close and constant contact with men from the East, devoted to the idea of revenge: General Mercier, to whom we owe the 75 mm cannon, the Buffet brothers, Commandant Picot, who defeated Jules Ferry in the Vosges in the 1885 elections, etc., etc., etc. For me, it was in their atmosphere that the true direction of French foreign policy lay.

Until now, France had been almost unanimous in this direction. The public schoolteachers were noted for their patriotic ardor and their spirit of revenge. Not one of them would have been able to say, as one of them did, twenty-five years later, at an election meeting in 1914:

- We'd rather be Germans than see our sons do three years' military service.

Ferry's colonial policy had not yet bitten into anti-German national sentiment. But already, in 1892, there had been a new development.

The Czar in Paris

This new fact was the Russian Alliance, which all our good-natured onlookers thought was directed against Germany, and which, on the contrary, was working in its favor.

On June 18, 1895, St. Petersburg, acting as Berlin's "honest broker", organized a meeting between our ships and the German fleet in the newly opened Kiel Canal.

The following year, the Tsar and Tsarina were acclaimed in Paris. As editor of Le Soleil, I absolutely refused to write a single article in honor of the Russian sovereigns, and I'll tell you why. My director, M. Édouard Hervé, of the Académie française, told me and came to tell me himself that the future might well prove me right. The future... Two years later (1898), the attempted Franco-German-Russian

coalition broke down on the desert reef of Fachoda.
From then on, the idea of Revenge lost ground; the French people, shown two enemies instead of one, didn't know which way to turn. Then they listened too much to the socialists, and in their wake, to Pottier 3's song, "Crosse en l'air et rompons les rangs", anti-militarism and anti-patriotism, masks of pacifism, made terrible progress.
The two Athens (1898)
I made one of my first runs outside France for the Athens Olympics, and noticed four things:

1. how all nations, except ours, are becoming increasingly nationalistic;
2. how much the Russian alliance has harmed us in the Greek, Latin and even Turkish East;
3. how much France's material importance has diminished in those countries of the Levant that were once all ours;
4. I'm beginning to imagine the decadence that democracy has imposed on France over the last hundred years.

The Dreyfus Affair (1897)
Originating in England, in response to the Congo-Nil 4 mission, the "Affaire" quickly became a maneuver by German espionage to free itself from French counter-espionage, a maneuver by the German army against the French army, which had become worrisome. Paris knows what Berlin is doing, but Berlin does not know what Paris is doing. Paris was able to equip itself with a mysterious new cannon, the 75, without Berlin noticing. The Dreyfus affair is not a judicial affair, it is a case of public salvation. Bainville, in his Histoire de France, noted one of my aphorisms:

5. If Dreyfus is innocent, let him be made Marshal of France, but let twelve of his principal defenders be shot.

So I launched a violent anti-Dreyfus campaign that didn't stop for ten years, the results of which were recorded by an unsuspecting Republican critic, Albert Thibaudet :
Politically, the Dreyfusards were victorious across the board. Morally, intellectually, they were defeated. It was their adversaries who prevailed; the ideas of Human Rights, democracy, etc., were defeated in favor of nationalism.
Loyal to Dreyfus, the noble Péguy caught up with Jaurès, whom he damned with invective and sarcasm in a famous book.
I - Intellectual Germany and Action française
In 1899, I joined the founders of L'Action française, Vaugeois and my admirable friend Pujo. So, for forty-five years, I had been working with my co-defendant.
The purpose of L'Action française was not only political, it was intellectual. L'Action française stood up to the Revue Blanche of the Natanson brothers and Blum, which was ardently Judeo-Germanist. Our movement aimed to combat German influence in the arts, literature, history and philosophy. Oh, we took into account the human side of Germany. The enormous faults of this people, witnessed by millennia of testimony, its perfidy ("genus mendacio natum 5"), its rapacity ("Germani ad praedam 6"), did not make us ignore the part it has played in civilization, its scholars, its artists, its philosophers, at a time when it had not entirely shut itself up and lost itself in itself, nor declared itself the master and God of the human race. We have honored, among the moderns, men like Leibnitz, Goethe, Schopenhauer, even Nietzsche, whose violent critique of the German spirit and praise of classical and Mediterranean civilization are too often forgotten.
But we have attacked, right to the root, that Germanism which has made Germany the synonym, the measure, of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, and which replaces humanity with Germanness (All Mann, all man, said Fichte, in his first Discourse). German suffices for everything. It is everything. Nothing is or is worth outside him. And so, he withdraws from humanity, or opposes it.

This schism seems to have begun with Luther (the German man, said Fichte). Then, under the influence of the defeat at Jena, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and their followers elaborated, developed and propagated their gospel of the German "I", which was the great driving force behind unity in Germany, and of which Hitlerism is a simple derivative adapted to new or barely renewed times.

For we know little about Hitlerism if we ignore this "Fichtean" root, to which no writer has written more than I have to draw the attention of the French. As early as 1894, before the existence of L'Action française, when Captain Philippe of the Colonial Year published the first separate translation of Fichte's Discourses à la Nation al lemande 7, I wrote an ardently motivated article in the Revue encyclopédique Larousse on this book, which reveals true German sentiments and the kind of good they desire from us. In thanking me, the translator wrote (I have his note) that the City Council of Paris, then a staunch radical, had been moved by my article and had bought 200 copies of his work. But 200,000 copies would have been needed to warn and inform the French. They were so far behind when it came to the truth about Germany!... . They remained so for so long, thanks to their bad shepherds! but we saw it later, with Mein Kampf... .

Such was the position of the founders of L'Action française with regard to Germany, and it dated, for me, from 1894. They were faithful to it.

Fustel de Coulanges' birthday

Ten years later, ten years after 1895, in 1905, they organized the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the birth of Fustel de Coulanges because:

1. this historian had brought out the true extent of the "Germanic" element in the barbarian invasions of the fifth century, the formation of the French compound and the genesis of French institutions ;
2. this great patriot had pointed out in striking terms the difference in the way history was written in France and Germany: national there, and anti-national here;
3. in this powerful indictment, Fustel de Coulanges showed the moral, social and political consequences of the liberalism of French writers and the militant nationalism of German writers;
4. in these two pictures, Fustel de Coulanges emphasized the double duty: for the scholar, that of being impartial and objective, and for citizens, that of serving, loving and honoring their homeland, not only in its territorial extent, but in its historical space, in its past.

"He who destroys the past destroys the Fatherland". This is an essential axiom of Fustel de Coulanges.

This celebration of Fustel de Coulanges brought us up against a passionate offensive from all the lefts, from L'Humanité to Journal des Débats. Jaurès, a Germanomane at heart, was unleashed. All the details of this scuffle can be found in my brochure La Bagarre de Fustel, collected in 1937 in my book Devant l'Al lemagne éternel le.

The character of our position vis-à-vis intellectual Germany will become clearer when we know that, the day after our magazine became a newspaper (1908), our first street battles took place between our students and the small group that a socialist professor 8 had taken to Germany to make him forget the great Alsatian-Lorrain mourning.

Monarchy and democracy

In 1900, I wrote my Enquête sur la Monarchie and concluded that Monarchy (traditional, hereditary, anti-parliamentary and decentralized) is a matter of public salvation.

Why this conclusion? Not by virtue of any feelings of personal loyalty or general principles deduced from divine right; I wasn't born a royalist. I had nothing to do with the Princes, nor did I know them. When I took up the pen on their behalf, my only reasons were based on the fact that, since the fall of its kings, the French Patrie, which had been born and raised by them, has never ceased to be exposed, eaten away at, threatened by foreigners, the natural effect of the incapacities of Democracy.

My reasons, set out in a volume that now runs to almost a thousand pages, are drawn solely from the

needs of the Patrie, its life and its greatness. It should be added that these reasons have grown in value over the last forty-four years. Back then, I only complained about the five German invasions since 1792: 1792, 1793, 1814, 1815, 1870. Since then, there's been the one in 1914 (as far as Noyon) and the one in 1940 (as far as Saint-Jean-de-Luz). However, no Bourbon reign had ever been invaded on such a scale. The last foreign peak, in 1636, didn't go beyond Corbie! Things have changed a great deal since 1792, when the Gironde republicans declared a war that lasted twenty-three years and which, after magnificent and exhausting glories, ended at Trafalgar, Leipzig and Waterloo.

In my indictments of democracy, my grievance, drawn from the harm it has done to France, is also drawn from the enlargements it has gifted to Germany.

Plebiscitary or parliamentary, republican or crowned, democracy, through the Girondins, through Napoleon, through the liberals of the 19th century, has been the greatest external architect of German unity. Jacques Bainville has demonstrated this peremptorily in Bismarck et la France, and above all in L'Histoire de deux Peuples, the two foreign policy Bibles of L'Action française, as well as Pierre Lasserre's incomparable booklet, Le Germanisme et l'Esprit humain 9.

Democracy's responsibilities are even more serious. It can be said that it has been unable to defend the borders of the Fatherland, since it has allowed them to be gutted seven times in one hundred and fifty years. On the one hand, it was, in Renan's words, the great dissolver of our military organization, and on the other, our "Gallic tumults" launched us four times into ill-considered ventures. For thirty-three years, from 1815 to 1848, only the monarchy found a strong, reasonable political method that kept us out of other people's wars and prevented them from being declared on us.

The same patriotism that made us want Germany to "return to the Germanies" and their "republics of Princes" led us to demand a king, a single hereditary ruler for our homeland, which had found its generating, enlarging and saving principle there.

In the appendices to the Enquête sur la Monarchie, in a document entitled Dictateur et Roi, you'll find a few notes in favor of the "professional army", which nobody thought of at the time, and which M. de Gaulle was to take up again thirty years later, you know with what success.

But let's continue down the thread of my political life.

War and peace

The year was 1904. But the "beaux esprits" of the turn of the century were not at all interested in national or military issues.

Invasion? There would be no more. Modern progress had made such antiquities impossible. War? No more war either.

They thought of perpetual peace through the spontaneous agreement of peoples, especially through the Workers' International. This was Jaurès's great "dada".

And Germany? Well, Germany would be the first to impose peace, because the German worker would never march against us for his princes... . Unfortunately, Jaurès himself could have been enlightened about this in the sessions of the Amsterdam Socialist Congress he attended in August 1904, and he could have understood that the German socialists had shown themselves to be very nationalistic, very devoted to their emperor, full of contempt for his Republic, and with little regard for his own person; this was verified in 1914, when the emperor's socialists carried out in Paris and elsewhere all the public or secret missions that Wilhelm II was willing to entrust to them. This is what we predicted.

In the ten years leading up to 1914, L'Action française had not stopped showing Jaurès the extent of his error regarding Germany. We know that, all afternoon on July 31, 1914, this incurable optimist didn't want to believe in war, and searched through dictionaries to find the least alarming meaning of the word "Kriegsgefahrzustand 10".

Had he looked at the world with the clear eyes of a free spirit, he would have seen that the time was not

right for peace. So many wars, in fact, since I saw the first horns appear in the panatheneic stadium of 1896!... . Turkish-Greek in 1899, Hispano-American in 1898, Transvaalian in 1899, Russian-Japanese in 1903-1904, war had been all around us. We said every day that it was getting closer. We said it, and they laughed at us.

II - L'Action Française and the other war

German provocation

Kiel and Tangiers

We saw earlier how the Franco-Russian-German colonial policy begun at Kiel, and directed against England, had broken down at Fachoda (1898). Democracy had left us without a navy against the most powerful fleet in the world... .

Admiral Bénard, Minister of the Navy, had said 11 :

- Our sailors know how to die.

You don't declare war to kill sailors. You have to have enough to resist the enemy.

The Republic then turned its foreign policy around. It made cordial terms with England against Germany. But democracy had just divided and perfidiously weakened our army as it took up the fight against the most powerful army on the continent. All it took was a speech from Kaiser Wilhelm in Tangier and a frown from His Majesty in Berlin to get our Foreign Minister, M. Delcassé, fired. This was what André Tardieu called "an unprecedented humiliation".

These two affairs, Kiel and Tangier, were for me a luminous, sharp and harsh stroke. As the second crisis developed, I analyzed them in a series of articles in the Gazette de France, describing the perils we had just escaped and tracking the progress of the German threat. The following year, the young editor who was publishing Jacques Bainville's Bismarck et la France (a capital book, as I said), asked me to turn my articles into a volume. I did. It was composed. I reread the proofs and recoiled in horror. Did I have the right to alarm my country to such an extent? I decided against it, reimbursed the printer and put the ominous proof back in my drawer.

The years 1907, 1908, 1909 passed. The rulers, when they show off, like Clemenceau in Casablanca, don't realize the immensity of the peril. The length of military service had been reduced, the training periods for reservists and territorial servicemen had not even been organized, and the incompetent General Picquart was Minister of War... . Another general, the one who succeeded him in the same post 12, said morning and night: "There will be no more war, there never will be". The patriotic Clemenceau himself humiliates the army by abolishing its precedence as organized by the Messidor decree: a colonel will henceforth be entitled to less honor and respect than a sub-prefect!... France must be warned at all costs. I took back my book and gave it to composition. It was published in July 1910.

I must admit that the effect was serious. The question I wanted to ask was asked. Could the regime save France from a disastrous war? It was, said the socialist Marcel Sembat, a huge question mark that I had written on the blackboard. Sembat was writing his book Faites un roi, sinon faites la paix (Make a King, or Make Peace) as a response or consequence. It was on this occasion that he called the Republic, in a manner so irreverent and scandalous for you, Monsieur l'Avocat de la République, "the headless woman". There was a reason for that nickname.

I've been accused of discouraging democrats from democracy. No; I enlightened them, I saved them from a dangerous euphoria, I forced them to think, despite the clouds of doctrine, of the evidence of their Fatherland in danger.

Kiel et Tanger energetically contributed to the national awakening that led to Poincaré's appointment to the Ministry and the Presidency, but, alas, without convincing Jaurès, the socialists or the radicals like M. Caillaux, who claimed that Germany was our best friend.

The reorganization

Men and armaments (1905-1914)

This loyal but timid attempt at nationalist renewal, promoted by Barrès and myself, proves that my colleagues and I have never been in favor of the politics of the worst. In attacking the regime, we have always served and defended the country.

But do we know what moral state we found the country in at the turn of the century? Around my thirtieth year, intellectual circles were mostly contaminated by cosmopolitan spirit, butch defeatism, disarming pacifism. Kids would come home from high school saying:

- Daddy, is it true that to be intelligent, you don't have to be patriotic? Others would say:

- Isn't the greatest nation now Germany?

Official processions led the children of Paris's public schools to march past the statue of Étienne Dolet 13 and then to hear, or rather, to applaud, La Marseil laise de la Paix:

Vivent les nobles fils de la grave Allemagne... .

. . . Tear down these flags! Another voice cries out Egotism and hatred alone have a homeland, Brotherhood has none.

Actresses from subsidized theaters came to recite these horrors under the patronage of well-known politicians. Such was the regime's official doctrine. Gabriel Monod called Germany "the second home of all men who study and think". The official doctrine of the University, denounced by our own Pierre Lasserre, was chorus.

This anarchy held sway in the streets as well as in the state.

It would take more than lines and pages to show how Maurice Pujo imbued his Camelots du roi, his Étudiants d'Action française and the elite civil servants of our Ligues with this magnificent national, civic and military spirit, which rekindled in the new youth a soul of pure, combative patriotism. With Marius Plateau and Maxime Real del Sarte, we can say that, from 1908 to 1914, six years of street battles and court battles, six years of prison and triumph, restored the national morale of all classes of the nation, for the young workers, the young employees, were as numerous in their ranks, perhaps more numerous, than the young bourgeois. The old French blood was reawakening, from all the pure bloods of its heredity, but rolling metals of unknown valour and generosity. Joan of Arc's name, her banner, her motto, the flowers brought to her statues as if to altars, remain the historic symbol of this fiery era.

But having begun by punishing Thalamas, we ended, as we had to, by supporting the government that held the flag and sword of France.

When M. Barthou put the three-year law to the vote, he said:

- It wouldn't have been possible without the Camelots du roi.

In other words, the Action française. They all kept revolutionary anarchy at bay.

These great internal tests of strength enabled us to restore hope and confidence on the outside.

In 1904, the old General de Galliffet was shouting everywhere:

- We don't need a war now. Oh no! We'd be screwed 14 .

In the autumn of 1913, we addressed our young friends, the conscripts who were joining their corps. Our speakers had all done their duty and denounced the war that everyone sensed was coming. As for me, I took the liberty of announcing the victory, by communicating the reasons for my faith.

All this was written, published and printed in its time. We'll find it again whenever we want.

At that time, it wasn't just the men who were lacking. Armaments had been terribly delayed for fifteen years. Three historic sessions of the Senate and the House in mid-July 1914, and a no less historic report by Charles Humbert, established that, following a regular circuit, the War Offices requested a certain number of millions for equipment; the Council of Ministers reduced it, and the Parliamentary Commission then reduced it again, often to fantastic proportions, and this had been going on since 1900. It was only at the end of 1912 that this cascade of reckless follies came to a halt. It was hard to catch up

in two or three years.
But while L'Action française was waging the necessary campaign for rearmament, the Socialists were getting I don't know how many deputies elected on the program of arms madness: "Why buy shells instead of textbooks?"
We'd know how to repel the Krauts with dictionaries and school books.
I wasn't working alone. At the same time as I was studying, Jacques Bainville, with his astonishingly precise mind, showed in the articles that made up his book Le Coup d'Agadir et la Guerre d'Orient, how much M. Caillaux, who believed he had appeased Germany by ceding our Congo to it, was actually whetting its appetite; and Léon Daudet led the long and perceptive campaign against German espionage, which was to become part of the eternal record of French defense, and from which he drew this Avant-Guerre d'avant l'autre-guerre, which even prefigured some of the Boche methods of 1939, those whose character was to rely on certain powers of the French state.
Daudet's prophecies were opposed by all the official forces, more or less gangrened by the prevailing pro-Bochism: the government press, the "bien pensant" press, the administration, the judiciary, Parliament, almost all the authorities. The whole of legal France was surrendering, or almost all of it. The men of L'Action française, almost alone with Barrès and Déroulède, sounded the French alarm against the threats of people who refused to see, or who wanted to sleep, those whose blindness was so strong that, on July 14, 1914, Jaurès, at a socialist congress, dared to advise a general strike in the face of the enemy. Jules Guesde rightly replied that this would be an act of treason against the most socialist nation, France. We were surprised to see L'Action française applauding Jules Guesde.
- Don't you see," we replied, "that he's from the party of France?
And that sounded like an extraordinary party!...
At the end of July 1914, Briand said:
- War? Come on! The Germans aren't crazy! ... The Germans reason! ... No, they won't go to war.
Two days later, it was all over, it was the invasion.
The Sacred Union (1914)
Let's go back a little further. In the wave of indignation that greeted the scandalous acquittal of Mme Caillaux, who had murdered Calmette, the national Paris shuddered.
And what was L'Action française doing?
While M. Jaurès spoke of a general strike, it recommended calm. It forbade the innumerable, ardent young people who listened to it and followed it, any movement that might disturb order; the European crisis made it our duty, it declared, to maintain inner peace and absolute composure.
Action française was obeyed. But then war broke out. Who then gave the first tokens of the Sacred Union? Action française. Who called for press censorship? Action française, through the voice of Bainville. And who, on the Grand Boulevards, had Almereyda's anarchist gang beaten up for disturbing the mobilization? L'Action française, always.
When, on the second or third day of the war, we receive a letter from our beloved prince, the Duc d'Orléans, saying:
- No more politics, to the flag!
we have the satisfaction of replying:
- Monseigneur, it's done.
The proof is in the testimony given by M. Poincaré in 1917, which I have read to you, against the false testimony of Paul Claudel:
"Sunday, October 28, 1917... . Since the beginning of the war, Léon Daudet and Charles Maurras have forgotten their hatred of the Republic and the Republicans, to think only of France." (Extract from Mémoires de Poincaré, Au service de la France, tome IX, L'Année trouble).

It would take too long to analyze the work of L'Action française during the other war. It is essential to note that it lost thousands of first-rate fighters, almost all the members of its cadres who were fit to bear arms.

These glorious dead, whom we still mourn, are to be classed among the forty or fifty thousand young Frenchmen who, in the words of the republican Georges Lecomte, gave the example of the first impulse and whose voluntary sacrifice saved the rest of the Nation. Those whose age, health or infirmity kept them in the rear, made it their duty to light the sacred fire and keep morale intact.

First and foremost, they unreservedly supported all governments, even Briand's, even after he had lost their confidence in his cowardly and suspicious attitude of December 1, 1916, after the massacre of our sailors in Athens 15 . We wished Briand durability and stability. We supported all ministers, except those who betrayed their duty, as in the case of Malvy, whom Léon Daudet had condemned by the High Court of the Republic 16.

Jacques Bainville never slackened in pointing to the age-old constancy of Germanic aggression as one of the most serious reasons for strengthening order and unity. His incomparable Histoire de deux peuples (1915) had such a powerful effect, with its irresistible charm and clarity, that the President of the French Chamber of Deputies, Paul Deschanel, future President of the Republic, endorsed all its themes in a memorable article in the Manuel de l'Instruction primaire, addressed to public schoolteachers. Shortly after Bainville, I published a collection of studies entitled Quand les Français ne s'aimaient pas (1916), in which I shamed my compatriots for deserting the spirit of France to pursue the bland pretensions of foreign, especially German, concerns. Briand's censor and his beloved Théodore Tissier 17 feared that such a book would lead to polemics.

- No one will move," I replied.

Nobody did. The bad advisors and bad shepherds were in no hurry to shout: "Cuckoo, it's us! They had nothing to say. But the confusion of the Enemy's former servants helped to recognize new reasons to love and honor the Patrie.

Likewise, for the same reasons of public order, we denounced those who still troubled it, like the wretched Almereyda, those whom Barrès called the "scoundrels of the Red Bonnet".

Clemenceau's anti-militarism had made me somewhat reserved towards him. I came to trust him when, enlightened by Léon Daudet, Clemenceau in turn denounced treason and espionage. Everything was subordinated to the need to defeat the Germans and unite the French.

We would have liked this "sacred union" to survive the war. We didn't break it. In the run-up to the 1919 elections, it was Millerand who was willing to have a "Bloc national", albeit a republican one. It was from this fatal word, uttered at La Paix, that a large part of the internal evil came.

The November 11th armistice and the bad treaty

By the end of 1918, the armistice had brought a natural sense of joy to the country. Although it was premature to say so, Clemenceau tried to blame it on Foch. But he had been the first to blame when, in September, he refused to give the already victorious Marshal of France any indications for peace.

At a time when the Pétain-Castelnau army was about to descend on the Rhine, envelop the German army in Belgium and reduce it to capitulation in open country, at a time when Franchet d'Espèrey was marching on Vienna and threatening Berlin, the armistice of November 11, 1918 limited and mutilated victory. L'Action française was the only French newspaper to reveal its unease and disappointment in those days. Bainville, Daudet and I were forced to share in the joy of triumph, but we were also forced to reveal our concerns, and then our alarms, about the political, diplomatic and financial imprudences that were being accumulated.

The occupation, masterfully begun by the great Mangin, applied all the traditional methods of revolutionary and royal France. But his authority was undermined, and in the autumn of 1919, he was

transferred from Mainz, where no one could replace him in prestige or match him in office.
The treaty was negotiated in spite of common sense, with no regard for the work of the preparatory commission that had functioned during the war under the presidency of M. Charles Benoist, nor for the wise advice of M. Jules Cambon.
No one wanted to have anything to do with the federative constitution of William II's Empire.
Germany was mutilated and irritated, but its unity was tightened. At the urging and threat of L'Action française, Germany was still forbidden to join Austria to its great body, strengthened at the center but dangerously scratched at the ends. You might as well cut off a tiger's tail and wring it out, administering tonics and fortifiers. Bainville, Daudet and I discussed this nonsense every day.
When this "bad treaty" was brought to Parliament, Jules Delahaye 18 came to us with the terms of a very measured, but very clear protest, before which the left-wing legislators left their ranks so as not to have to support or contest it. But in the corridors, Clemenceau took Jules Delahaye to task:
- France must not be allowed to doubt peace.
- We must warn it of war," replied Jules Delahaye.
War has indeed returned, in small but sure steps.
III - Twenty years of alarm from Warsaw to Munich
After we had thus protested, by proxy, from the rostrum of the Chamber, I can add that the next twenty years, from 1918 to 1938, were spent warning the French of the war prepared by the treaty's concealment of victory.
Every educated man should have read Jacques Bainville's classic book on this subject: Les Conséquences politiques de la paix. Everything that came out of this peace is announced, including the start of the war and the point at which it was to begin.
At the nerve center of Poland, this was almost the case in 1920, when the Russians marched on Warsaw. The Germans were waiting for the moment when, as masters of Poland, their allies the Soviets, to whom they had facilitated the revolution of March and October 1917, would swell their own army and march with them from East to West. Once again, L'Action française was the voice, the loud voice, of national anxiety. Unfortunately, Bainville was on vacation. I filled in as best I could. My repeated calls every morning contributed to Lyautey's decision to send the Weygand mission to Warsaw. Everyone knows how effective the advice of Foch's illustrious lieutenant was, and the direct blow it dealt to the Moscow invasion.
German hopes were dashed, but not for long.
In 1921, Germany resumed the offensive by another route. Briand returned to the Foreign Office, and resumed his terrible game of dissolving arrangements. France had already laid down some of the weapons left to her by the Treaty. We had given up on many reparations. Briand set about liquidating the rest. In March 1921, he demobilized, remobilized and re-demobilized part of our army. This made it practically impossible for him to call them up again. He then made the trip to Washington to hand over our present and future navy to the decisions of an international assembly 19 , in whose debates our representatives barely took part, as English was the only language used.
Finally, new losses were envisaged in a new conference, when the motion of the 249, initiated by Léon Daudet, then deputy for Paris, recalled Briand from Cannes and forced him to resign.
This new triumph for L'Action française seemed to herald the resumption and rectification of our surrender to Germany. Mr. Poincaré succeeded Briand. Mr. Poincaré, who had defined the treaty as "a continuous creation"! A promise of vigor, but one that has disappointed us! This Poincaré, weakened, aged, especially ashamed of appearing a creature of the Right, in all singularly hesitant... . In 1919, he had failed, despite his promises, to keep Mangin in Mainz. In 1922, 1923, 1924, he didn't dare take up Mangin's policy again. It was still possible. In the autumn of 1923, Barrès, visiting Speyer, heard an old

canon, a friend of France, say to him:
- Monsieur Barrès, here we are undoing the work of Bismarck and Luther.
But this fine Rhenish work needed to be backed up by the sword and the spirit of Paris. The Government, very hesitant, kept its indecisive spirit, its sword in its scabbard. In mid-1922, the highest military authority had advised that, if something was to be done, it had to be done fully and quickly: enter Germany via Mainz and the banks of the Main, seek out the German army, if it existed, defeat it, enter Berlin, and dictate new terms from there.
As the strongest military power in Europe at the time, we were strong enough to do it. M. Poincaré didn't dare. ... He preferred part to whole, the Ruhr to Berlin. We resigned ourselves to the Ruhr, and the support given to this expedition earned us the assassination of Marius Plateau 20 by a police girl, and the murder, more cruelly refined, of a fourteen-and-a-half-year-old child, Philippe Daudet, Léon Daudet's own son 21.
But these two unpunished crimes left Mr. Poincaré as frozen as he must have been in the face of external crises. Before the Ruhr had produced the major financial results he had hoped for, and when the occupation had only just begun to pay off, Mr. Poincaré let it go. Between two efforts, he had chosen the weaker one, and by ratiocinating, he lost interest halfway through.
From the Ruhr to Mainz
Emboldened, in February 1924 the Germans sent busloads of murderers armed to the teeth, who, in Pirmasens and Kaiserslautern, besieged their compatriot friends of France, burned them alive and returned to their country in triumph, unmolested. Barrès had died the previous December. He did not see this catastrophe of honor. All those who knew him say that, had he lived, Poincaré would have experienced the reactions of the national conscience; but, alone, without advice, or assailed by bad advice, Poincaré knew only the timidity, human respect and false terror of the pro-German Left.
Yet this was the psychological hour. Hitler had just appeared for the first time in the Munich riot, alongside Quartermaster-General Ludendorff, and it was time to put his foot down on the lit fuse of revived Pangermanism. But democracy was only thinking of preparing for the "Black Sunday" elections on May 11, 1924. The foreign parties were playing into its hands, for the first step taken by Herriot, backed by his "dear Blum", was to upset the beliefs of the Catholics of Alsace. Here again, they found us in front of them, and a huge popular meeting in Strasbourg forced the Cartel to turn back. Another victory for L'Action française pour la Patrie.
The preceding pages have the appearance of a summary of general history. They form the table of contents on which our activity has been based, whether in protest, correction or rallying. There wasn't a day when we didn't have to explain how Briand, who soon returned to the Quai d'Orsay, resumed his eternal and fatal policy of real concessions in exchange for written or spoken words.
Our reparations were sacrificed, but not our foreign debts, which were almost even demanded.
Germany was allowed to reorganize and even rearm. When this rearmament was brought to Briand's attention, he would say, "Put those files away. He let Stresemann tell the German princes that he had made formal capitulations, but that these were nothing more than "finesse". Hadn't the Briand-Kellog Pact put war on the international map? And didn't it appear to all?
That's why, in August 1929, in The Hague, a serious arrangement was made that broke everything up: the evacuation of Mainz. "Mainz, the most important city in Europe", said Napoleon. Mainz, through which Germany was held under French cannon fire. Mainz meant the possibility of a lightning march by our armies. Mainz also represented the possibility of terrain superiority for a people of thirty-nine million souls, who had to contain and control sixty-five million of them.
Our entire winter, at L'Action française, was spent denouncing the folly of this monstrous arrangement, whose execution was announced in half a year's time: Mainz! Mainz!

Tardieu, who had succeeded Briand, was a little reluctant to face up to the prospect of the evacuation of Mainz, but left nothing to hope for22 .

It was done, settled, signed, he said. What a wretch! A true statesman, thus confronted with vital necessities for his country, would have found ten legal means and a hundred political reasons to escape this cruel deadline. But it was not to be. We multiplied the means of warning. One of our collaborators, a war aviator who was our editorial secretary, flooded Paris with flyers urging the French people not to consent to the destruction of their security. Nothing helped, not even the warning we were the first and for a long time the only ones to give, based on information from Dutch sources, about the hidden progress of Hitler's party. The information given to Maurice Pujo, and used by him, left no room for doubt; it was reliable.

Once Mainz had been evacuated, the Hitler party was unmasked. The evacuation took place on June 30, 1930; after ten weeks, on the following September 15, one hundred and ten Nazi deputies were elected to the Reichstag. Paris, France and the world were stunned. Only readers of L'Action française were not surprised.

Hitler's sword (1930)

We've already had occasion to describe the origins of Hitler's doctrine: that of Fichte, that of Germanism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But it's worth adding something else to the mix: more than just a party, there was the Grand General Staff of the German army.

We saw Hitler learn his trade in Munich under Ludendorff, and now we must remember how the old Marshal Hindenburg agreed to give way to Hitler. And let us not forget the significant features recounted by M. Benoist-Méchin in the first, unedited edition of his book L'Armée al lemande, when, at the height of the 1918 revolution, a former saddlery worker, Ebert, was President of the Reich and telephoned the same Grand General Staff every day to report to him or to ask for orders; this gives us a glimpse behind the scenes of Hitlerism of some strong military head who inspired most of his game and the game of his party.

This party is above all pangermanist. It is religiously and historically convinced of the racial superiority of German Man over any other representative of the human species. But this party cannot ignore the fact that it reigns only by the sword forged by Blücher, Moltke and their ilk. By sparing their army the debacle of the armistice of November 11, 1918, by parading them under triumphal arches and garlands of flowers, by calling these vanquished victuri (those who would conquer), the General Staff was certainly exploiting the two physical forces of the German instinct: rage at defeat, and the will to repair it. We are not friends enough of Germany to do her the service of ignoring her military qualities, which are known to all her enemies; she is too stupid, or, if you like, too bestial to know how to use this power, but it is there that the sources of her fortunes live. Hitler and his party are not married to the German High Army, but I have always advised good minds not to count too easily on the fatal triumph of antagonism between Party and Army, between Hitler and the Generals. Their union will certainly unravel, like German unity; fragile and brittle products, they won't break on their own. They had to be broken.

Mein Kampf

Electoral and riotous, parliamentary and military, the Nazi victory needed to take root in the German public mind. Hence the extraordinary dissemination of Hitler's book, Mein Kampf (My Fight), which was given to every newlywed couple as the cornerstone of their new home. But this book contains many pages full of hatred and threats against the French people. It was of the utmost interest to make this book known on this side of the Rhine, especially as concern was beginning to spread to our government and the parties that ran it. A young publisher, Fernand Sorlot, had a translation of Mein Kampf made and put on sale. Then something unheard of happened: from Berlin, Hitler forbade the French

bookshop to sell his book, and sued it, a lawsuit that was pleaded in our courts like a party wall suit on some international trade law. And Hitler won! And the government did not intervene! And the Government of democracy did not say that this was a political and national matter, a question of public salvation on which our sovereign people had the right to know exactly what was being printed against them! The translation of Mein Kampf disappeared from the shelves and was buried in the publisher's cellars, and all our protests did nothing to stop it. We published an anthology in our Echoes. We asked for a complete official translation for schools, in thousands of copies, to bring a little truth to the French people. In vain! The French remained condemned to ignoring what threatened them so closely.
Already, however, it was being whispered in the "spheres" that the democracies' war against Hitler was fatal; only the people who were to pay the price were not made aware of their enemy's evil designs.
The rise of Hitlerism (1934-1935)
In the country's democratic opinion, which remained worried, people didn't dare admit that there was a threat from Germany. They referred to the threat as Hitlerian, Nazi, or even Fascist.
But fascism was also used to designate non-democrats, French nationalists, as the natural allies of the White International, while "anti-fascists" were, or believed themselves to be, the natural allies of a Red International due to their similarity of doctrine or, as they put it, ideologies.
Three observations need to be made here.

1. The Red International has disappointed democracies: in 1914, when German socialists marched with their emperor, and in August 1939, when Russian revolutionaries marched with Berlin's Hitlerites.

2. The doctrinal similarity between Hitlerism, Fascism and French nationalism would then have to be reconsidered. To a certain extent, Italian fascism - anti-capitalist, anti-elective, anti-republican (until 1943) - bears some relation to our ideas. Very limited relations: Mussolini's fascism is profoundly statist and centralizing. We are the opposite. For almost twenty years, our great friend, the late Marquis de Roux 23 , made many profound criticisms of it in our Saturday economic and social page. If the ideas of Action française include an authoritarian state, it is concentrated in state functions, and leaves its natural scope to private initiatives, to those of communes, provinces, professions, bodies, companies and communities; the doctrine of Action française wants the king, but under the king, it wants "republics", because it is profoundly decentralizing. These differences are so serious that they have never allowed us to admit any serious identification between our constitutional plan and Mussolini's achievements.
The differences are even greater between our ideas and those of Hitler. It is not realized that he won largely through election by universal suffrage, because in Germany, thanks to Fichtean doctrine and Germanist education, the democracy of 1930 was much more nationalist than in France; socialism was never anti-patriotic and anti-militarist as it was in France.

3. Finally, we have never believed that states and peoples should inevitably ally themselves on the basis of similarities in their internal status. Nothing could be further from the truth. The very Christian King Francis I allied himself with the Grand Turk, the cardinals of the Roman Church, like Richelieu and Mazarin, allied themselves with the petty Protestant princes of Germany.
At the height of the democratic diatribes against Fascism, the real Fascism, Italian Fascism, had done us a proud service in July 1934 when Mussolini had massed 60,000 men on the Brenner against Hitler and the Hitlerites, thus halting their march on Vienna.
A patriotic Frenchwoman, Countess Joachim de Dreux-Brézé, was at that time in the Austrian Tyrol, staying at a summer guesthouse run by Hitlerites, who had invited her to witness the telephone calls and retelephonings announcing the momentum, the success, then the halt, then the retreat of their Viennese wave. Mme de Dreux-Brézé recounted these dramatic hours in pages of luminous, vivid objectivity.
Our Revue universel published them; L'Action française supported her; they appeared in volume Chez les nazis d'Autriche. I had the very great honor of writing the preface, but not one of the official organs

charged with the moral direction of the country deigned to pay any attention to this dazzling opinion. Whatever one's opinion of Italy, the fact attested to the importance of this pawn on the European chessboard. The man who governed Italy showed pace and decisiveness. It was in our interest to keep him with us, to guard against a possible backlash against us, not to throw him into the arms of our enemy. It was well worth distinguishing between fascism and Nazism.

Ah, ouiche! We didn't care about alliances and rivalries. It was a time when we were tiring Belgium with our disjointed policy. Were we going to do the same with Italy? No, at first. M. Laval made the trip from Rome to offer and deliver to Italy one hundred thousand square kilometers of French land in the African Tibesti. But this unrequited gift gave little indication of his seriousness! Once the gift had been made, and the agreement concluded, M. Laval hastened to render it sterile: for the Abyssinian affair, which had so little to do with us, he let go of Italy and ran to England, while pretending to let go of England for Italy, and while proposing to both of them a poorly-tailored deal of the kind you find in a parliamentary corridor. Neither was satisfied, and Mr. Laval had to sit with his ass between two saddles on the slippery floor of his agreements with Mr. Hoare.

The second pre-war period (1934-1935-1939)

In the face of this prodigious accumulation of nonsense, a certain alarm was growing: the Hitler we hadn't dared unmask before the country was rightly feared. The Vienna adventure had shown that he was rich in evil designs. Were the rulers going to bring their conduct into line with this mistrust? Not at all! Hitler had only to proclaim that it would be enough to give him back the Saarland; there would be no better neighbor than him. We readily believed him. We accepted the extravagant conditions under which the Saar plebiscite was held, and this little shoulder of heights, which still defended our victory a little, was abandoned. A grave hour! From then on, nothing separated us from the "vanquished", a vanquished that outnumbered us nearly two to one! The collection of L'Action française could show how the enormous perils of the situation were highlighted.

Democracy took no notice.

Reversal of pacifism (1938)

In truth, the Maginot Wall was being built; but it could not be the starting point for an offensive (unless unimaginable wheels were put on it).

Now, listen carefully. Listen to what L'Action française was alone in reporting at the time.

It was in the middle of that crucial year when the Saar was being abandoned that the idea of going to war, and an offensive war at that, came to the French democratic parties.

Until then, the idea of going to war had been considered a monstrous impiety by all their Briands and sub-Briands, as long as we had the means to wage this war powerfully thanks to the Rhine occupation and thanks to Mainz, as long as we could still enter Germany, even as long as we commanded a corner of the German border from the top of the Saar.

These elements of strength and victory allowed us to wage a happy war, they allowed us to do so, and we forbade ourselves to do so. But as soon as we lost them, we began to want to wage war, to risk an unfortunate war, as if we'd wanted to be beaten.

Peace! peace! you bleated when you were strong.

Since you were weak, you've been howling: war! war!

One of L'Action française's most ardent campaigns was against those former pacifists who, as early as September 1935, were calling for war against Italy; as early as July 1936, for war against white Spain; as early as 1938 and 1939, for war against Germany - in other words, for three whole years, a battle on three fronts. In 1936, the idea of war made immense progress. A section of Parliament, the marching wing of the legal republican country, embraced the idea. One hundred and forty socialist, radical-socialist and Christian-democrat deputies demanded sanctions against Italy in writing, and called for

battle without further delay.
And so, on the steep slope of war, do we know what the responsible government's first concern was in 1936? On February 13, the Sarraut cabinet dissolved all the patriotic and national leagues in connection with a graze inflicted on Léon Blum's ear by police agents provocateurs. An admirable way to rekindle the country's fighting spirit. A new, highly original edition of the old "sacred union".
The following month, March 1936, the Germans violated the Treaty, crossed the Rhine in arms, and established themselves in the zone that had been off-limits to them. M. Sarraut crowed in vain. If he had had the means, he would have acted, but what could he do without an army? Talk!
He sings! He shouts! He knew as well as anyone that you don't wage war on the eve of a general election. Afterwards, whatever! Not before! The Legislative Assembly of 1792 had been elected when it declared its great, long war on April 20. Napoleon III had the results of the plebiscite in his pocket when he declared war in July 1870. M. Blum was in the mood for war once his majority was in place. Neither he nor M. Sarraut were likely to alienate the electorate by preparing for battle. So the Germans settled wherever and however they wanted. It was another lost position, after the Saar, after Mainz. It's not our fault that everyone then saw what could be done to Republican policy and energy. The "headless woman", always!
The following month, the 1936 elections! In fulfillment of the oath sworn on July 14, 1935 between all the parties whose leaders included a few accomplices in the great Stavisky swindle, the Communists, Socialists, Radical Socialists and Christian Democrats went to the polls hand in hand, forming a very handsome majority and an even handsomer ministry, that of the adventurer Léon Blum, who had told the French "I hate you". The ravages of this dry Popular Front revolution are well known, but the impotence was even greater than the damage.
At the end of October 1936, without an hour's reprieve, the judgment sentencing me to prison for having tried to prevent war against our former Italian ally, who had just done us such a favor on the Brenner, was executed as soon as it became final. I'm not complaining about having spent the two hundred and fifty days in prison that earned me the civic crown awarded to Magic-City 24 in the midst of a far too benevolent Paris. I immediately used my freedom to publish articles, meetings and conferences, denouncing to France the cruel extremities of insane warmongering that coincided with our pitiful weakening.
I didn't limit myself to comparing our evacuations of Mainz and the Saar to the free military occupation of the Rhine. I showed how systematically the organization of our army had been reduced by successive advanced governments after 1924, as after 1932.
"The Left are coming", cried the world of Geneva. But this arrival of the Lefts, after signifying the disarmament of France, placed it on the slope of warlike madness, with no birthrate, no army, and no assured continental alliance! The war of an army polarized entirely on the defensive, when it was a question of protecting our allies of the Little Entente 25 , then qualified above all by the number and gravity of their disagreements or by the ease with which they had loosened their ties with us. What, moreover, could we do for the Poles and the Czechs? Where was the great shock army needed to breach the Siegfried Wall? But above all, neither the moral state of the French people, disappointed by the der des der, nor their population, after two million men had been bled in four years, authorized new outpourings of rarefied blood, nor new sacrifices for the sake of chimeras. So what was the point of this war? We couldn't see it.
It was even less clear where this metamorphosis from pacifist sheep to war-mongering bulls was coming from. These questions, put to the four corners of the land, have never been answered by anyone, ever. I would add that for once, the unofficial press, from l'Ordre to l'Aube, insulted me as much as it could; never did this press, I say, supplement its outrages and lies with a direct answer to my question: You had

your armor on and you wanted peace; you're unarmed and you want war? None of their writers has been able to explain why they were so anxious not to use their ancient power, and why they pushed us, threw us and hurled us into war as soon as we were powerless. Folly? Treason? History will tell.
As for us, we weren't bleating about peace. We were simply showing that it was extremely necessary for France at the time; we were analyzing the situation objectively, and demonstrating that it was impossible for us to intervene for the time being. But, knowing Germany, we concluded that rapid precautions were necessary for the near future.
So each demonstration was followed by an exhortation summed up in one word, written three times in a different font: Arm! Arm! Let's arm! How did the left-wing parties respond? With propaganda leaflets accusing the Navy and Air Force budgets of cutting into those of schools and hospitals, or criticizing the rulers (poor rulers!) for haggling over strikes, leisure time and facilities, while young attachés to ministerial cabinets, like Marceau Pivert 26 , led furious campaigns against passive defense in certain Parisian districts! In the midst of the war!
Still disarmament; still the 1914 socialist program on "the folly of armaments"!
However, in September 1938, our energetic campaign, bolstered and supported by Parisian opinion, had won the Munich stalemate, which was to the country's advantage, as we were then even less ready than we had to be in 1939.
But soon after, Daladier began to soften. Eventually, he would growl to his nightcap that war was inevitable.
At the same time, he was personally getting in the way of our armament campaigns.
Here's how it happened:
It was July 1939. I had just returned from Algeria, having seen many bad omens in the sky, on land and at sea. I was obsessed with three necessities on my return:

1. to prove to boastful Italy our firmness in occupying Sheik-Saïd in the Red Sea, opposite her Eritrea ;
2. to prove our desire for an arrangement with her by making offers likely to interest her in the Adriatic by diplomacy capable of making her listen better than the vain ambassador we had sent there;
3. lastly, to quickly remedy our glaring air inferiority.

In fact, I found Paris moved by this last sad truth, asserted everywhere, that we didn't have enough planes.
- So, I said, let's build some.
- It takes too long," he replied.
- Let's buy some...
- We don't have the money.
- So let's organize a big national subscription... .
And I launched, at the head of L'Action française, the idea of raising large sums of money to ensure the freedom of the French sky. I also had the idea of proposing this appeal to all our colleagues, of all colors, so as not to be left with the few poor millions that would have been raised by our efforts alone, in order to obtain all the necessary billions in a hurry. But the same government that declared war inevitable, the same government that knew better than we did of our air inferiority, asked all the press unions not to support this proposal. Was it because we were royalists? The national interest should have limited partisanship. In any case, it was easy to have the same proposal taken up by some brother or friend. We would have applauded and joined in wholeheartedly.
The first half of 1939 was spent in useless pleas. I had had occasion to say and write, on several occasions, that Hitler was "enemy number 1". So, said the brainless?
So," I replied, "all you'd have to do is know who your enemy number 1 is, and you'd run straight at

him? Straight at him? Just like that? without worrying about time, place or means? The history of 1940-1944 has since shown us that countries as vast, rich and populous as the United States and the British Empire took long years to set up means of action proportionate to the objective; for long seasons, we saw them resist Moscow's urging to create a second front hic et nunc! There was no need for such an example; common sense and common sense should have made us understand that you don't start a war until you've assembled the personnel and equipment.

As for the risk of being forced to defend ourselves, it was better to run that risk and wait for the attack to come, taking advantage of the moral benefits of this aggression. In 1914, our mobilization was enthusiastic because we were invaded. Peasants would have jumped on their pitchforks to repel the invader. Everyone knew why they were going to the front. The mobilization of 1939, masked by superficial demonstrations, was hardly correct because we didn't know why or against whom we were going. Hitler? Unknown! We hadn't even let him make a name for himself with his book, written against us. Fascism? The name was hated by politicians, but politicians don't make war, and those who do aren't politicians. Finally, the "war of the democracies" delighted no one, given that democracy in France disappointed everyone, and as for what it was elsewhere, in London and Washington, little was known.

This sums up columns and columns of discussions that we supported for the sake of peace.

Our four rules

As things got worse, our positions were taken more firmly.

I formulated them several times, in August 1939, in four easy-to-follow propositions.

1. We must not go to war.

2. If it is forced upon us, or if, despite our advice, it breaks out through the fault of the Government, let's go to war, and let's go to war well, thoroughly, with all our might. Let's win it. To win it: Arm ourselves! Let's arm! Let's arm!

3. And if we win. Ah, then don't be silly: let's make sure that Germany is put out of its misery for good, in other words, let's use the same methods that put it out of its misery in the past. After all, it's not stupid military agreements like those signed after Jena or after 1918 that will be effective - they've always failed. It's not big contributions that Germany ends up never paying, or exasperating occupations with no clear objectives. Let's start by energetically renouncing these modern clouds, whose ineffectiveness has been flagrant. Let us use the method that gave a century and a half of tranquillity to the people of France, and even to Germany until Frederick II: the method of the Treaties of Westphalia, the destruction of German unity, the return to Germany, Jacques Bainville's peace, in a word.

4. To achieve this result, the proper use of victory, the attainment of victory, let us give the war a national objective, that is to say, outside a misunderstood anti-Hitlerism and an outdated democratic spirit: let us proclaim that we aim at the political decomposition of the enemy.

And, for these last words, we received new bundles of nonsense. What's that? Cut up Germany? with a kitchen knife? The idea was to use Germany's centrifugal forces, its natural particularism, but they said we'd irritate the Germans! As if we didn't irritate them even more by shooting them! We were accused of preventing the skilful manoeuvres that would separate Hitler's party from the rest of Germany, as if Hitler's party, born of Fichteism, were not the same as that of unity and the greater Germany! We were going to hurt the most sensitive part of the German heart, as if our solution were capable of hurting the slightest German fly! As if we didn't know full well that there were many traces of a particularist spirit and total separatism in Germany! The circumstances were favorable, for the exclusion of the Jews from Germany had deprived the unitary party of a large number of devoted supporters: before 1914, were they not citizens and voters of the great Reich, but not of the various Landstags of the individual states?

All you had to do was read our words. They took into account everything that our senseless warmongers forgot or denied without reason.

Russia (August 1939)

In the midst of these discussions, a thunderbolt burst forth, an event that could have enlightened the opinion of the most moronic of morons: the treaty of August 22 admitting the alliance between Germany and Russia. We had never ceased to point out that this alliance was latent but still in force (according to information provided by a patriotic Alsatian), that the Treaty of Rapallo (1922) had been renewed several times in Berlin, and that we should remember Bainville's name for Poland: he called it the link between the two great empires of Central and Eastern Europe. As long as Poland was not once again divided between them, it was necessary to anticipate their agreement. After that? it would be something else! For the moment, union was inevitable. And here was this inevitability bursting forth, proving itself, striking down our opponents. The immediate consequence was that any theoretical possibility of a major ally in the East disappeared. Those supporters of the war who still had a shred of common sense had hitherto professed that, without this great alliance, the war would become impossible, as Poland was not sufficiently armed, its army not sufficiently mechanized, its fifty cavalry regiments unable to cope with an enemy armed with tanks and aircraft, it would soon be out of the picture and we would have to bear alone all the aggravated weight of an increased Germany, strengthened and intoxicated by its victory. But these half-wise men either kept quiet or forgot their half-wisdom. The crazier the idea of war became, the more its supporters displayed blindness and fury - blindness against common sense, fury against us who kept reminding them of it.

Our pleas: a reprieve!

It is important to concentrate here a few of the final notices issued by L'Action française between August 23 and September 3, 1939.

On August 26, 1939, we transcribed the opinion of a military leader "as thoughtful as informed", showing that what we would undertake on the Rhine would be very costly, would weaken us cruelly and would be of no use to Poland.

It's exactly as if someone wanted to use his head to break through a solidly masoned wall to rescue someone whose throat would be slit on the other side. Conclusion: delay! Postpone!

Anything of this order creates respite, gives time, allows us to gather and reorganize our forces; anything that postpones the stupid all-out battle of the impulsive and the passionate creates a clear superiority in favor of the arms of the Fatherland. Are we going to throw these powers of the future into the abyss?

And the opinion began as it ended:

Let us bristle with defenses, let us mobilize or remobilize, let us be on all points. It's natural, it's necessary. It would be criminal not to do everything that lucid information and accurate calculation recommend. But walking before we've been walked on is another matter.

And three days later, on August 28, 1939, we recommended the party "to arm, re-arm, over-arm and wait with guns blazing". We feared that "an ill-timed offensive would break our backs for a hundred years"... . . In particular, I added that we should not wish France "another bloodbath".

Between letting the most dangerous of the Great Germanys last or grow, and the massacre we're being pushed into, I'm in favor of letting the time run out.

Let's die, certainly. But, as General de Castelnau said at the pre-war maneuvers in 1913, we must "die mightily", and every beautiful death must serve a purpose.

A death without power is pure inanity and imbecility, and a scribbler's death has no honor.

Such was the tone and meaning of our last-minute pleas. A reprieve! Time to arm ourselves! The time that England and America have since taken, but that we didn't, because our politicians didn't think it through.

Daladier's imprudence

Meanwhile, our warmongers were arguing that Hitler was playing poker, bluffing, pursuing a policy of prestige without reality. M. Chamberlain declared that he would wage war neither for Danzig nor for Poland, but for higher principles, for his religion, for his ideal, in the kind of revolutionary propaganda war in which France had exhausted itself from 1792 to 1815.

To this war of principles, M. Daladier added a war of supposed realism: the honor of our word, the necessary help to be given to our allies, even though he knew, or should have known, that the material means of this help would elude us, as indeed they did.

He was unarmed. He didn't arm. In 1915, armament had been stimulated; fruitful improvisations had the disadvantage of enriching many brown intermediaries and creating bad new rich people, but also the advantage of increasing armaments. At least we had guns and ammunition. It was in 1939, still disunited and disarmed by the Front Populaire, that the Daladier government came up with the farcical idea of limiting earnings, and consequently war industry production, for as long as it could. But no gains, no war products. A great industrialist, not interested in stirring up competition, but French above all, M. de Wendel, took to the floor of the Senate to demonstrate how stupid and disastrous such limitations were. He might as well have sung. But nationalized factories were becoming rarer and less efficient.

To appreciate just how imprudent M. Daladier was, we need to remember that the precarious state of our air force was not officially discussed and recognized until six months after war had been declared, at the Chamber's secret committee meeting of February 9, 1940, at which M. Fernand Robbe 27 said: "Germany has 4,000 planes in the front line, 3,500 planes in the second line. How many do we have? 800. Minister Guy La Chambre maintained that we had 2,300. This calculation was full of little tricks and big deceptions. Assuming his figure, the enemy had 7,500 aircraft, five thousand two hundred more than us. And we have to assume that between September 1939 and February 1940, our aircraft production must have made some progress on the figure we had on the day war was declared. But what was that figure? Nobody could say. It could only have been lower, even than the figure of 800 given by M. Robbe.

Such were the neglects, presumptions, ignorances and imprudences that we fought with all our soul in opposing the 1939 declaration of war.

Determined to ignore our repeated adjurations, Daladier did his utmost to stifle them.

1. On August 27 or 28, M. Meyer, head of the judicial police, called my dear friend Maurice Pujo to tell him that Daladier had asked him, Meyer, to approach him to stop my campaign. Pujo replied that we were assuming all our responsibilities. Let the government assume its own, and if it wants to stop freedom of the press, let it re-establish censorship.

2. Daladier then re-established censorship, and his first move was to redact the entire page of L'Action française where I renewed my pleas for him to wait, to arm, to re-establish our alliances.

3. This censorship preceded the declaration of war. In 1914, the press remained free to think what it wanted about war and peace. In 1939, our boute-feux were chattering their teeth at the thought of having their beloved war torn away from them. We were determined that our newspapers, had they been free, would have been enough to ward off misfortune. Chained, we lacked the means to do so, and Paris could not be alerted as it should have been.

Faced with the immensity of the various misfortunes that have befallen France over the last five years, there is not a reasonable patriot in the world who can dispute the good sense of our opposition, the justice of our reservations, and refuse to regret that we did not listen to them, and that we did not also redouble our preparations, by arming, rearming and overarming. A veritable usurpation of executive power brought matters to a head, and war was declared on September 3, 1939.

War declared

The first of the four rules we had imposed on ourselves had fallen by force majeure. We could no longer observe it.
We put rule no. 2 into effect, while continuing to think about rules no. 3 and 4.
Rule no. 2: we have to win the war, so we have to help in whatever way we can, by supporting and strengthening the country's morale:

- Trust the government, whoever it may be.
- Urge it to react against all the shortcomings of democracy.
- Suppress Communist sabotage.
- Monitor party intrigues.

We have been with the Government every time a question has arisen between it and the parties.
But, by virtue of the generous and free support we gave it, we cordially warned it of weak points.
He had counted on the enthusiasm of the war against Hitlerism. He had been disappointed. Germany could worry the French; Nazism was neither hot nor cold for them. Similarly, let's repeat the famous "war of the democracies" refrain: the combatants weren't democrats, and democratic politicians didn't fight spontaneously, or very little, or very badly, and many, like the communists, deserted or sabotaged. It took four years of rigorous, tyrannical occupation to reawaken the flame of patriotic spirit, action and language in the left-wing parties.
It was therefore essential to recall, from time to time, our rules no. 3 and 4 to give the war a national objective, intelligible to all nationals: the destruction of German unity. In this respect, Daladier's ideas were incoherent. While we were busy propagandizing this idea in England with the help of friendly Englishmen, Daladier was shifting senselessly from one idea to another. One day, he'd have my clarifications on German unity redacted; another day, he'd give the order to let me do it. I kept shouting at him: if you're going to fight a war, fight it well, and to win it, give it a French objective, accessible to the French. Yours move only an insignificant number of our combatants. This war must not only be fought out of duty on our side, but also out of passion, as it is on the German side.
Daladier and his men never understood this. Nor did they understand our initial and perpetual suggestion: Pétain! Pétain! War must be fought by people who know how to fight it; even in the General Staff, neither Pétain nor Weygand were employed in time.
When Paul Reynaud succeeded Daladier in 1940, he was no more intelligent than Daladier about the aim of the war, but we praised him for finally calling Marshal Pétain, and M. de Gaulle for the same reasons.
To give an idea of the national loyalty with which I supported the Government at the time, and on the most delicate points, we must remember one fact:
When the misfortunes of May 1940 began to show our obvious inferiority in equipment, on land and in the skies, in tanks and in aircraft, I never wavered from my campaign that hope was military. I quoted all the rumors I could gather on how it was possible, by makeshift means, to balance the German machines, to stop their rapid advance by circling them on their wings. Among other things, I wrote at the head of my "Politique" on June 9, 1940, when everything was going wrong:
What saved and saved
The characteristics of the Battle of France are based on two difficulties: numbers and terrain. The terrain: we are being invaded. Numbers: they're trying to overwhelm us.
A third factor was expected by the enemy: machines. But, faster than the enemy could have foreseen, if we couldn't pit tank against tank, nor wing against wing, similar mechanics were found and put in place which exactly repaired and sometimes cancelled out our theoretical inferiority.
Clearly, the gaps in our preparation could not be sufficiently filled by the clever detour of marvellous improvisations. There is no fairy wand that makes up for time and continuous effort, and our old

Armons! Armons! Armons! did not find an echo for more than fifteen years, but warlike things are not so subject to the royalty of the material that one cannot create in a hurry those efficient equivalents to which man adds his multiplier, and which multiplies him himself. When we tell the story of the days last May, when the 75 and heavy artillery were able to intervene to help overcome certain deficiencies, we'll know a fine page in the military history of our homeland, and we'll also have a stroke of brilliant light on the way in which human things are sometimes driven by what is most human in man: the Spirit.
Charles Maurras.
Such pages of resistance and invincible hope have since earned us, for four years, long rivers of insults spewed out by the pro-German press in Paris.
I've never ceased to be proud of it. Writers don't fight. His role is not to weaken the morale of armies or populations, but, on the contrary, to strengthen it by bringing faith, courage and the will to win to the highest level, and also by setting himself an example of unflagging loyalty. In 1914, when von Klück was approaching, I refused to leave Paris because Galliéni had said he would defend him to the bitter end. One of the government's companions at the time, as he fled to Bordeaux, urged me in writing to follow him because Paris was about to be reduced to ashes, and I replied that I'd rather be below than outside.
In 1940, we didn't leave Paris until we were absolutely certain that Paris would not be defended.
In Poitiers and Villefranche-de-Rouergue
When we left Paris on June 10, 1940, we went to Poitiers to print the paper, which ran for six issues. The penultimate issue was again devoted to the column "L'Espérance est militaire" ("Hope is military"). Here is the text:
L'espérance est militaire
This title is not new.
L'Action française is rewriting it on this June 12, 1940, from the rock of Poitiers, where it had to move, but it had been written twenty-two years ago, in March 1918, in one of its Paris editions, under the threat of a first emigration almost decided.
It was a difficult time indeed. The English and French had just been cut off by a terrible German onslaught heading for Paris. Little did we know that at the same moment, a decisive meeting of chiefs was taking place at Doullens; unity of command was about to be established, with Foch taking over as general commander. In our ignorance of these two great supreme joys, and under the blows of the alleged fatality with which we were supposed to be burdened, our reason and our heart agreed that only one thought should face them: the thought of the Army, of our confidence in it, and of the exclusivity of this confidence. The Army, yes, but alone. Apart from the French Army and the victory that would take everything, everything was lost: war, peace, everything, we said, or else the Army would save everything.
Hope was therefore military at the time.
It is exactly the same today (1940).
And I dare say even more so.
For in 1918, we were dealing with a romantic emperor with whom it would not have been altogether absurd or crazy to imagine, perhaps in a vague way, some system of composition and arrangement of peace and agreement more or less likely to be kept.
Here, nothing of the sort. No pact, no treaty, nothing, nothing: the yoke. We have before us a bestial horde and, leading this horde, the individual who is its most exact and complete expression.
We are dealing with the most savagely barbaric aspect of Germany: unbridled greed and ambitions that nothing can moderate, political, social and moral aims of which we have scarcely any idea. Property,

people, freedoms and lives are also threatened by this horde and its levelling system, so that nothing, nothing, nothing can remain free or safe.
This house, this garden, this shirt, this job, this song, this idea - everything must be stolen, forbidden, torn away, crushed. If we stopped putting our hope in our army, there would be no natural force, no moral mediation in which to confide, women, children and the elderly exposed to the same exactions, the same violence as property. What we saw in Romania in 1918 and in Poland in 1939 would be seen again in France in 1940 and beyond, if our army were defeated; everyone would have to despair equally of everything, and above all of everything they believe they possess and can dispose of. All we have left to liberate us are the weapons wielded by the armed forces of our people, and by those who instruct them in the noblest of arts: the art of protecting the only guarantee of civilian life.
Those who know Hitler's Germany, those who see the progress of essential Germanism, know that I exaggerate nothing. The misfortune of my words in recent times is certainly not that I have pushed things too far, but that their truth, however accurate it may be, has not been accepted by the usual lightness and skepticism. We've been sounding this alarm for years, and it's hardly been believed by more than a few far-sighted and thoughtful minds. Here we are, on the brink of an abyss. What stands between us and it? The army. This is our only hope. Our hope is military. It's our only hope.
You can trust us on that. No one has been more opposed to war than we have.
Whatever pretext has been invoked since 1935, and whatever legal and moral doctrine it has been colored with, we have spent months, seasons and years shouting and shouting again: No, no and no!
Yesterday, I was leafing through the file of our articles from August 1939.
But we were careful to add:
Beware, this war, if it comes, whether we impose it or it is imposed on us, we will have to (but we absolutely must) fight it to the end and until victory, or (refrain) all will be lost of all that can be recapitulated of our liberties, our goods and our persons, as well as the safety of our lives.
One way or another, war has come. And, as it is, we must wage it under these precise conditions. We have no future except in the happiness of our weapons. Our only guarantee is in our magnificent soldiers and their great, admirable leaders.
Charles Maurras.
Incidentally, one of the prosecution's documents imputes to us at that time the state of mind of "capitulation". If you read this page from June 11-13, 1940, you'll realize the enormity of the lie they're trying to smear us with.
It was only in the last of my Poitiers articles that, warned of General Weygand's opinion and Marshal Pétain's decision, I declared, in my profound dismay, that I had confidence in the most competent and glorious of experts. It would have been stupid and ridiculous to superimpose our competence on that of the victor of Verdun. It would have been anarchic to substitute our will for the will of the Chief; it would have been foolish not to put the will of public salvation in the forefront of all imperatives, by those who could know the conditions.
We were astonished by the speed with which the Marshal made people listen to the authority of his word. Our predictions of the victor's barbaric fury were somewhat contradicted on this point; the armistice we glimpsed did not strip us of everything, it would leave us with a free zone, the fleet, the Empire, legal and moral sovereignty. The Marshal's armistice left us in the condition of dealing with the victor, a condition which, as an English magazine observed, did not then belong to any other of the peoples defeated so far by Hitler. The Marshal's armistice, signed in honor, between soldiers, created a situation that had to be used for the good of France.
This was better than a war of excess like Gambetta's, whose errors M. de Gaulle himself has pointed out so well.

It could have the same happy outcome for France as the armistice of November 11, 1918 had for Germany, allowing the vanquished to recover and grow stronger.

IV - Taking a stand in the wake of our disasters

These were the irrefutable reasons behind the declaration of June 26, 194028 , drafted in Villefranche-de-Rouergue, where we had retreated and which we entrusted to the Havas agency in Bordeaux. Here is the text of this declaration:

At the first rumor of the armistice, L'Action française raised the cry in Poitiers, where it was published, that it would repeat when it resumed publication: "Fou, et fou à lier serait tout quel Français qui voudrait substituer son jugement à celui qu'ont émis les compétences militaires des Pétain et des Weygand. These two great Frenchmen had in front of them all the information they needed to know. Absolutely no one could have judged it as they did. The murmurings of bitter specialists are an affront to common sense. Of all those who would like to pursue the struggle to the utmost, not one is now unaware that it is impossible on the territory of metropolitan France; they want to take refuge in our colonies. This would be tantamount to abandoning France and handing her over entirely. When would we see her again? Perhaps never.

With this military point settled, everything is dominated by the national question. Those with a sense of our past wonder if we haven't fallen to the lowest ebb of French history. Well, we'll get back on track if we retain the essential and vital feeling of our unity.

French unity first! In unity, everything can be revived. But if we had the misfortune to divide ourselves, even with the illusion of facing a victorious adversary, that division would only ever benefit him.

Our only chance lies in maintaining the strong national unity embodied by Marshal Pétain and his collaborators.

However sad and harsh the situation may be, one thing can make it worse, and that is the tearing of the Patrie's tunic. But those who are tending to this crime are precisely those responsible for this ill-prepared war, those who have caused us to lose the effort of ten centuries in ten months. Against the painful necessities to which solid reason and a faithful heart are forced to resign themselves, the same people in charge are unleashing an outburst of verbal patriotism, the meaning of which is not difficult to understand. ...

I was thinking of M. Mandel and those on the deck of the Massilia.

It's all about serving causes that are hardly national: forgetting their mistakes, the interests of their parties and the maneuvers of foreigners.

French unity first! This is the only axis and column of hope. No Frenchman worthy of the name can lose sight of this fundamental axiom. Our entire future as a people depends on it.

Charles Maurras.

The 1940 armistice

Concern for the future, and for the condition of that future: French unity, was indeed what dominated our minds.

We thought, like Galliéni and Foch, that we had to fight to the bitter end, that is, to the last point of usefulness for victory and power. We did not believe that we should always push this war to the limit. Let's repeat all the necessary explanations.

The outrageous war of 1870 consisted of singing in September that we would not give up an inch of territory or a stone of the fortresses, of rejecting the moderate conditions proposed by Bismarck (cession of a piece of Alsace and a contribution of two billion), all this fuss only to have to cede the whole of Alsace and part of Lorraine five months later, and pay five billion. What about honor? First of all, honor had been saved at Saint-Privat and Reischoffen. Honor gained nothing from the siege of Paris, the German encampment on the Champs-Élysées, the Paris Commune and the second siege that followed.

If Napoleon I's European adversaries had waged all-out war on this model, they wouldn't have had a soldier or a cannon left to take their revenge in 1812, 1813, 1814 and 1815.
If the Germans of 1918 had waged all-out war, they would have been surrounded and taken prisoner by Foch, Pétain and Castelnau, while Franchet d'Espèrey entered Berlin. They would not have been able to reorganize and prepare their revenge for 1940.
A timely armistice, even a disadvantageous peace, can save the future by preserving honor. The 1940 armistice saved the future with large chunks of the present.
With this in mind, gentlemen, I would like to ask your permission to respond in a few words to the astonishing factum read out yesterday by the clerk. I've been accused of a "mad confidence", a "mystical confidence" in Marshal Pétain. They say: You spoke of the "Pétain miracle", you spoke of a "providential man"!
Gentlemen, I'm not a plagiarist; I'm in the habit of leaving to each his own.
Well, the "Pétain miracle" didn't come from me, but from someone much more competent to talk about miracles, from the Pope himself. It was Pope Pius XII who, with his experience of supernatural things, but also with his great natural wisdom, said it. Pope Pius XII knows, reads, speaks and writes seven living languages; in his long life as a diplomat, he travelled the whole world; he was Nuncio to both Americas. Within this magnificent culture, Pope Pius XII possesses an experience of the French language that is perhaps unequalled; extraordinary though it may be among Roman theologians, he loves Bossuet despite his Gallicanism. I was very pleased, very proud, to find myself in agreement with him on Pétain. The "Pétain miracle" is a term coined by Pope 29.
Now, as for "the providential man", you have to go down a step, it's not my word either; it's from the dean of the diplomatic corps, that is, from the Papal nuncio who said to the Marshal: "You are the providential man."
There are other words, other formulas that have been applied to Pétain and that I have often repeated; in particular, it was at a time when President Roosevelt was beginning to clearly outline the trend of his policy, which was a complete alliance with England. At that time, Roosevelt sent someone to Marshal Pétain to congratulate him on his "magnificent work".
Finally, at the Clermont banquet that Pujo and I attended in the winter of 1941-1942, presided over by the American ambassador, Admiral Leahy. After listening to the French speeches, the Admiral thanked the Marshal and concluded by drinking - to the health of the Head of State? Not at all! He said: "To Marshal Pétain, your national hero.
You can imagine, Messieurs, that after Roosevelt, Admiral Leahy, the Papal Nuncio, the Pope himself, I was able to abandon myself very calmly, in complete safety, to my natural, deep admiration for Marshal Pétain!
Don't forget Verdun, don't forget his role in the final victory, his intervention in the Rif, his embassy in Burgos and Madrid. He is a man who has always succeeded perfectly, and the magnificent words with which he gave of himself to France moved me deeply, coming from an old man of eighty-three.
This is the secret of my adulation for the Maréchal.
The meaning of the armistice: the two armistices
But I must tell you something that's no secret, but that's a little too little known: there were two armistices.
Those who followed Marshal Pétain on June 26, 1940 agreed with Danton that "you can't take the Patrie with the soles of your shoes".
The Marshal's concessions were those made by all the defeated. But in addition to substantial realities, he kept open the possibility of all kinds of internal reorganizations. It has not been stressed enough, moreover, that in saving national honor, the Marechal also preserved respect for our alliances. In

Bordeaux, at the height of the crisis, the British ambassador, Sir Ronald Campbell, asked our ministers ten times: "What about your fleet? Isn't it at least delivered? - No and no!" Ten times at least, he was assured of this. It was confirmed by the facts: the fleet was not delivered, the fleet remained with us, and, two and a half years later - November 1942 - in order not to be delivered to Germany, what remained of this fleet was scuttled.
Such was the double honour of the armistice. Such were the benefits that would have lasted had it been respected by others, as it was by the Marshal, who preserved its value as a pact before the British and Germans alike.
The Marshal always refused the Germans military collaboration against England. He always refused them the Mediterranean support points - Bizerte, Toulon - that they demanded, and even claimed to require. He himself had to be dispossessed of them before the Germans could establish themselves there.
However, as soon as the armistice was signed, it immediately found two enemies: England and the Franco-German party.
The British
The position of the French rallied around the Marshal with regard to England was quite clear.
On the evening of the day our dispatch was sent to the Havas agency, I was at the home of a Republican politician who had gathered a number of members of L'Action française during my brief stay with him. As I've already recounted on several occasions, one of them asked me a strange question. He said to me (and I quote his authentic words):
- If the Lord gave you the power to choose between Germany and England, which way would you choose?
- For England," I answered without hesitation. Germany remains enemy number 1.
That was, once again, June 26. Eight days later, on July 3, the English fleet came to cannonade our ships anchored, almost unarmed, at Mers el-Kébir, killing more than fifteen hundred French sailors, for no reason, no use; the fleet was not to be delivered, there was no reason to presume that it could be, and in any case, the Germans could not come and take it from where it was.
Well, Mers el-Kébir did nothing to change the Marshal's armistice.
The Marshal didn't deliver the fleet.
He did not wage war on England.
He did not collaborate militarily with Germany.
But something has changed in our moral relationship with our former allies.
The balance, which was in favor of England, was not tipped in favor of Germany.
It was in balance between them, there was an enemy number 1, there was ex aequo an enemy number 1 bis.
The answer is: it was war. Yes. . . but war with France.
England felt it had to continue this policy, which alienated many French people.
It attacked Dakar. It attacked Syria, French Equatorial Africa, and later Madagascar. It organized a colonial war that soon took on the proportions of a civil war. And England organized a daily radio broadcast of insulting propaganda against continental France, the State and the Marshal.
It was for our own good, his friends would say. Others still think that our good seemed strangely subordinate to hers. We admire her for going so far out of her way to attack Germany, her neighbor in the North Sea! We're also surprised that our good included so many evils for us.
Before the transformation of our metropolitan territory into a battlefield, the ruin of Toulon and Normandy, the bombardment of so many of our cities, the burning of vast countries, the great circuit of our colonial empire (which took a long time, and robbed us of many distant possessions) was apt to arouse the most legitimate distrust. However, the loyal supporters of the Marshal's armistice never asked

for, nor did the Marshal make war on England, as would have been possible. Everywhere, we confined ourselves to pure and simple local defensiveness. This always irritated the pro-German press in Paris. Neither these outrages on the one hand, nor these brutalities on the other, succeeded in pushing us back to Germany.
In the press, the same defensiveness was also practiced, in response to the radio. To its daily defamations, we needed appropriate rebuttals. It was our duty, and we did not fail to do so. We never went beyond our rights, either to uphold the independence and sovereignty of the French State of which the Marshal was the Head, and with which America itself was long represented, or to respond to the slanders of émigrés with the legal qualifiers inflicted on them by the legitimate authority of our country.
And (refrain) neither these polemics, nor the material and bloody blows inflicted by England, resulted in the delivery of either the fleet or the naval support points that Germany was demanding. As for the defense of the Empire, it was summed up in Weygand's words: "Neither to one side nor to the other". It's impossible to imagine a more loyal program on the one hand, and a more patriotic one on the other. It's the one the Marshal has strictly adhered to, and we're all behind him: to observe the armistice against all odds.
V - The Laval party The German party The armistice to deliver everything
But we're talking about the Marshal's armistice, the national armistice, the armistice intended to save what could be saved.
There was a party for whom the armistice consisted in surrendering everything.
It's impossible to move in this direction without focusing on the man who distorted and lost everything: M. Laval.
M. Laval is a man of rare skill in all cases where his direct personal interests are at stake. When he was penniless, he made a fortune. He was registered on the carnet B as an anarchist in 1914, he went to Kienthal 30 during the other war, he got away with it to the point of becoming the idol of the conservatives and even of a certain number of nationalists. His penultimate masterpiece, in June 1940, was to surprise the Marshal's confidence for a few months and, thanks to his experience of parliamentary circles and his political savvy, to be entrusted with the second seat of state. His final masterpiece was to cool his heels a little with the Franco-German party represented by Déat, so as to provide himself with a good alibi for anti-Germanism.
M. Laval is an excellent pilot for his own boat, but detestable for the ship of state.
As soon as immediate self-interest no longer spurs him on, Mr. Laval is reduced to the resources of his ignorant, narrow-minded brain. Such political incapacity has never been seen before. His withholding of 10% on the eve of elections was enough to rally the civil servants against him and get the Front Populaire elected. I have already outlined his Anglo-French-Italian policy, and have not said all I could about his stupidity. His German policy in 1935 was even more stupid. He had, he thought, just sketched out the elements of a defensive alliance against Germany. It was, he said, the excuse for his agreement with Moscow, which would allow him to go all the way to Berlin... . And there he went, the animal! Hence our parable of the wild boar hunt. The leader of the hunt, Mr. Laval, recruited the best riflemen in the canton. They agreed. Then Mr. Laval runs to the bauge to say:
- Do you want to be part of the battue, Monsieur du Sanglier?
Throughout 1938-1939, he became entangled in his contradictions. They were so strong that the Franco-German party had no trouble putting him on its sad flag.
In 1940, he led the armistice party. Not to save the day; we had two armistices. But to deliver everything.
On our first trip to Vichy, July 11 or 12, 1940, Laval made great advances to Pujo and me. We were cold. He said, "Give me your men, I'll work with them. We simply replied that we could put at his

disposal a great jurist who could help him in all matters of national and international law, the Marquis de Roux. The name put him to flight. He warned us to stop talking about Germany, lest we talk about France, as if it were the same thing! He told us that, within three months, the Germans would enjoy irresistible popularity in the occupied zone, and that this was the greatest danger facing France; that we had to put ourselves under the Germans' boot at all costs. . . This nonsense, repeated over and over, made us judge the man.

In September 1940, we passed on to General Weygand, who read it at the Council of Ministers, an admirable letter from Baroness François de Lassus, whose husband, president of the Ligue d'Action Française, had fallen on the field of honor three months earlier. The letter protested against Laval's radio station, which was lobbying on behalf of the Germans. In retaliation, Mr. Laval's censors wanted to hit us for our attitude, but the measure taken against the newspaper provoked an incident at the Council of Ministers, and on the Marshal's personal protest, the suspension was rescinded; Mr. Montigny, General Secretary for Information, telephoned us by order to apologize for the error.

A few days later, following a discussion with Maurice Pujo, he authorized us to carry our permanent headline: "La France, la France seule".

And L'Action française kept it for four years, despite the fury it provoked in the two foreign parties, the pro-English and the proboche. But it was the latter that had to be wrestled with on a daily basis, as the pro-German party, through Laval, held all the reins.

There could be no doubt. The all-surrendering armistice party had organized around M. Laval and his newspapers.

This press had two poles. One, unofficial, paternal, "moderate", represented by Dominique Sordet's Inter-France; the other, boisterous, excited, vehement, by Déat's L'Œuvre. The in-between was filled, as befits its dupes and accomplices. They all shared a common trait: they made a mockery of any sense of French honor. M. Montigny could disdainfully say that the policy of dignity was worth what was called the policy of firmness, in August 1939! ... . But what was rejected by name, every time, was the idea that we could come back from this defeat. It was definitive, acquired, eternal.

The Marshal's armistice, the armistice of salvation, reserved the future in particular. It preciously stored up and preserved forces. These were the very forces that were openly disregarded. Not only was the armistice a "fiction", the demarcation line a word, the empire, the fleet, terms without reality, but all conditions were held to be revocable "ad nutum", the goodwill of the victor being held to be the rule of all; but the Germans were rushed to the front to make offers of services they didn't ask for, or didn't even think of asking for. The armistice was not concluded to avoid losing everything; according to these people, it was the total gift of the country to its victors of the day.

Wasn't it stupid," M. Laval liked to say, "to fight every twenty years between neighbors? First of all, we didn't fight every twenty years! And the way to always fight was to beg for humiliating, exasperating servitude, which would generate new conflicts!...

We saw above how much importance my youth and middle age attached to the idea of revenge, which had been, for twenty years, a "Queen of France". The contempt thus lavished on her was enough to arouse my attention. As soon as I read the August 1, 1940 issue of Inter-France, i.e. in mid-August, I wrote the following letter to its director, Mr. Dominique Sordet:

Limoges, August 15, 1940.

To Mr. Dominique Sordet.

Dear Mr. Sordet,

On my way through Vichy, I read your Inter-France of August 1st.

I have no idea when L'Action française will be able to resume publication of the music column you wrote, but one thing is certain: the author of this issue of Inter-France will never set foot in our paper

again, nor will his disgraced signature be found there.
Is the awful page you signed your own? I doubt it. The words you use to describe Germany, the ones you use to describe "jealous patriots", or "unrepentant super-patriots", are reminiscent of Prince de Bülow's words:
- We didn't ask for Delcassé's head, it was offered to us.
So here you are, Monsieur, in 1940, much like Rouvier in 1905: one of those Frenchmen who offer Germany what it doesn't even ask for.
After a few weeks, Rouvier repented; he had that much time on his hands. Was it left to you, Monsieur, and your miserable inspirers? Or has the harm you have deliberately done to France in critical circumstances become definitive and without remedy?
Not content with running ahead of the victor's wishes, not content with taking your offers beyond his demands, you still want us to run and offer as you do. You even dare to overwhelm with pretentious sarcasm the French who refuse to imitate anything of your baseness; they don't understand, you say, they don't know... . And you, what do you understand? What do you know, you wretch?
Twenty times in the last few years, I've been tempted to point out some of your nonsense or platitudes. I gave in to the pleas of friends who interceded on your behalf.
I was too good!
This time, it's a question of patriotism and honor, as much or even more than political spirit. We can't just smile and let things happen.
So farewell, Monsieur, be happy and, as you say, confident under the banner of your collaborator and protector, victorious Germany.
Live with her, in "agreement" without "reluctance", intoxicating yourself with all the elixirs of her "good will". We are honored to keep our distance, to remain among Frenchmen worthy of the name. It's impossible to salute you, believe me.
Signed: Charles Maurras.
This is the letter, and this is how L'Action française writes to Germany's supporters.
At the same time, L'Action française announced to its readers the dismissal of Mr. Dominique Sordet. In order to avoid the impression of a perfunctory execution, I demanded the immediate replacement of the music critic. Objection: there was hardly any music reviewing to be done in Limoges at the time. Mr. Sordet's successor, the eminent musicographer Joseph Canteloube, was asked to write a regular musical chronicle of the "Chansons populaires de France". This interesting series continued for over a year.
After M. Dominique Sordet, it was M. Déat's turn. Here's the document that concerns him: it's a letter written on September 2, 1940, to M. Tixier-Vignancour, head of Radio Nationale, about his political writings, in fact in response to a letter of apology dated August 27, in which he confused my positions with those of M. Déat.
Limoges, September 2, 1940.
Dear Sir,
(. . .) This letter brought good news: you changed the place of the Déat quotations, and modified their volume, which was scandalous. Unfortunately, this scandal began again the day before yesterday, August 31, at noon.
The truth is, everyone who thinks about it is wondering what this suicide policy is all about. How can you let an obvious opponent of France and the social order take this public license to set everything in motion against you: you, the French state, you, the non-Marxist state, you, the opponent of class struggle, anti-patriotism and anti-militarism, and you too, Tixier-Vignancour.
(He was a patriot.)
In the biggest of tricks, sewn with red thread, we denounce the "survivors of a somewhat shaken

regime", and can't you see that it's this survivor who's leading the charge against you? Can you read Radio?
What you tell me about the convergence of Déat's and my theses in 1939 is obliging, conciliatory, and can be taken as political. It isn't, because it's not true. His refusal to "die for Danzig" comes from a man who is thinking of public movements, of "stirrings", as he puts it, tending towards refusals of service and military mutinies that could turn into revolution in the face of the enemy. The terms he uses show him to be utterly devoid of any sense of French dignity or self-respect.
We didn't agree with him when we told the simple objective truth: what could we do for Poland? We could do nothing.
We were suffering from a case of force majeure, but without denying that we would have had to die for Danzig if we could have died usefully and powerfully, without abdicating, as Déat did, any spirit of political foresight, without blinding ourselves, as he did, to the enormous evidence of the European peril posed by the progress of Hitler's Germany. Jaurès had already shown his resignation in 1913; recall his conversation with Barrès back from the Levant. In 1939, Déat had resigned himself to it, like his sad master.
Our position, the only political one, the only one worthy of a national like you, Monsieur Tixier-Vignancour, maintained all the precautions and warnings, armament, rearmament, overarmament, alliances, everything that the Déat position refused, explicitly or otherwise.
So it was night and day. We were thinking about the future as well as the present, instead of childishly denying the danger or figuring he could ward it off with figures of speech. In fact, he was replacing it with another: that of an internal war, no less lost for the order and interest of France. M. Déat's way of saying "No war" was exactly that of those Jaurès and Caillaux who, between 1902 and 1914, ceded everything, the colonies and armaments, making the Great War inevitable.
To refuse to distinguish between two thoughts as opposed as M. Déat's and ours, on the pretext that they come to the same verbal conclusions, represents nothing more than a fictitious and, once again, verbal realism. If you were to look a little more closely, you'd be sure to see the ideas very clearly.
I don't reproach M. Déat for coming from Geneva, as you seem to believe, that's his business. I reproach the former Air Minister of the Sarraut cabinet for perpetually disregarding France as a Nation, and for literally not giving a damn about it. Don't tell me that at any other time in his life, he bore arms with honor;
So did M. Gaston Vidal 31. Both managed to get paid cash and carry. It's your duty not to be fooled by these merchants.
But it so happens that our polemic is being exploited and amplified by the enemy, which, you say, is having the most disastrous consequences at home and abroad. Do you think my replies were necessary to give the enemy the means to amplify and exploit M. Déat's theses? They were tailor-made for his interest, his pleasure, his essential utility. And whose fault is that? First and foremost, you. You had censorship, you could have stopped M. Déat's infamous proboches in their tracks. It wasn't my replies, which were still too moderate, that started the evil. Your police and information services should have made you aware of the double effect of M. Déat's scandal: it vindicates the slanders of London radio, and recruits supporters for M. de Gaulle by the dozen. And that's not all: the French people, less stupid than one might think, are sensitive to the public carnage the Marxists are wreaking on their honor and vital interests. They have therefore felt an anguish that makes them say: So, the Government hasn't changed in France? The new one is just as good as the old one, and the only difference is that M. Déat is handing it over to the Krauts, whereas M. Mandel was handing it over to the British? Injustice? The injustice of pain! It would be unforgivable if you hadn't so unfortunately forgiven Mr. Déat everything. You could have nipped his recent maneuver in the bud, and you should have. But you didn't. The only effective

brake came from us. Because we were known to be friends of the Government, our harsh opposition to Déat led to the conclusion that this badly-repentant revolutionary was not always as much a master of the new game as he first appeared, and that it remained possible that his briandism would be crushed in time.

Collaboration with the enemy, you tell me, is not only, as I said, possible, you declare it necessary and inescapable. My God! Don't attribute nonsense to us in order to refute it more easily. None of us has ever encroached on the land of the necessary and the inevitable. Ananké 32 is not in question, nor is its loyal acceptance. You should see for yourself. Please also refer to the preceding lines. I do not criticize Mr. Déat for giving what we cannot refuse, but for delivering what we should reserve and defend. I reproach him for adding to the necessity he has suffered the offers of a filthy and stupid freedom, his own, which is as good as that of M. de Gaulle. The unfortunate man puts everything on the carpet, and he throws it in, he rushes it in, here and now, like a commodity that belongs to him. He runs up to the occupier, pulling him up by his bootstraps, the better to show the extent of his hopes, his broad views, his intentions, worthy of the most cuckolded of international liberalisms. All of this, moreover, with the force of Gribouille's tricks, Calino's mathematics and the range of wit of a pedagogue with a big mouth. So this pro-Boche Kérillis is delusional? Is he? To whom? And who can be fooled? Just read it. And you'll be convinced of the extent of his blunders. Assuming, as no honest Frenchman would, that the policy of the "yes" clan must be followed by that of the "ja" clan, reason is still sufficient to establish that we must distinguish this policy per se from a published, flaunted, displayed program. There's a difference! Something else is doing, something else is talking. I'm well aware that these Roumestans can't come up with an idea without going up to the podium without ranting or jumping on their pens to scribble it down. And that plays into realism!

No village horse trader is unaware that announcing concessions has the inevitable and immediate effect of inflating the demands of the informed partner. It's foolish to assume that he'll settle for what's on offer. He'll jump at it, grab it and, as if it were already his, firmly establish himself, only to leap up and demand something else. This is so monstrously obvious that I'm ashamed to write it to you. Your Déat and his friends are an abominable bunch.

Their campaign, of which you seem to be the dupe and victim, combines all four characteristics:

- moral indignity,
- political imprudence,
- diplomatic imprudence,
- and the most enormous psychological error that can be made about the German character.

It's pretty, it's complete, it's enough to make us wonder if French Radio's program is to bring a nice, clear, limpid water to the mill of the two enemy radios.

That's the gist of my answer. I'd like nothing better than to complete it in person in Vichy. I'll be there towards the end of the week. Oral explanations can help clear up any misunderstandings. But the above should be obvious to you. The mistakes that have been made can still be made good. Don't dig your heels in, or you'll be finished! You'll end up with everything you don't want, and you'll weep tears of blood, which, believe it or not, won't be much consolation for someone who gave a lot of warnings of this kind, which people didn't want to listen to, and which events have only too cruelly approved of, to the great misfortune of our Patrie.

As I am about to say that I have the honor of greeting you, I am struck by a veritable epinal image, the coarseness of which should settle everything. Read the unbelievable comment that the people at Inter-France have just made about the plan to transfer the postal control at Moulins to our Pyrenean border. This project is what it is. It may have advantages, or it may be equivalent to the present situation. But some unfortunate people have come up with the idea of superimposing disastrous motives on this

material arrangement, which is of no consequence whatsoever.
Do you know what Inter-France is arguing about? What it calls the fiction of the independence of the free zone! So be it. And from you to me, it's a fiction. Alas, we know it as well as that moron, the Boche can do what he likes there, we're not taught. But it's not up to us to write it, it's not up to us to publicly tell the Kraut that the Armistice is something he can transgress at will and at his leisure, and that this legal threshold will not be defended. On the contrary, common sense dictates that our role should be to cling to the slightest stipulation of the armistice, without for a moment suggesting that we are not taking it seriously, and that its clauses can be contested and minimized. That's the whole point. Otherwise, their negotiators will have no trouble replying to ours: "Well, you know that, because an official agency has said so and written it in your country.
Why do we say what we shouldn't say? Is it to do the wrong thing? Faced with the enormity of the error committed, one is tempted to wonder whether there isn't a hint of treason here.
I hope not. To explain these traits of catastrophic stupidity, it's enough to have hearts spoiled by ignorance, thoughtlessness, fatuity, presumption, pedantry, lack of education and instruction, the habits of mind of Marxism and Briandism, and a total disregard for the objective interests of the Fatherland. But here, allow me to tell you, Sir, that while it seems quite natural to see Déat deaticizing, with the support of all the Montigny caillautisants of the Censure, it is painful for us to see Tixier-Vignancour supporting him through the voice of his Radio.
Just yesterday, September 1, at noon, this Radio station widely echoed the ridiculous article in which M. Déat proposed himself as Peace negotiator. . .
Is that enough... ? These three dots cover a monosyllable of very strong meaning. I've always disapproved of the pejorative use of a term that means nothing but pleasant, but I see how it can be applied to a senseless policy. It means absolute passivity and the ability to allow oneself to be maneuvered at the pleasure of a third and a quarter. I have the right and even the duty not to desire this fate for a French state that has returned to its national goals, which must stand firm and act, play tight, and take the trouble to think about the consequences of things, actions and words... .
These pages, which are already long, do not need to be extended by a request for an explanation of a word you said that surprised me. It's not enough to say that you've been misinformed; there's never been any kerillism around me, so there can't be any left.
Please accept, dear Sir, the expression of my most distinguished and devoted sentiments.
Signed: Charles Maurras.
P.-S. - I read today's L'Œuvre on Monday.
"Il y eut le plan incliné de la victoire.
You frighten me with this inclined plane of this new defeat in some suicidal madness 33 . I do what I can. You should think about it objectively. But alas!
In date (summer 1940) and meaning, these two letters are crucial. In the second, the whole tactic of the pro-German party is already summed up. As early as August 1940, M. Déat was accused of delivering and offering what should be reserved and defended, and of rushing everything down the drain, pulling the occupier up by his bootstraps to do the opposite of what even the smallest village horse dealer knows and does, offering more than the Kraut asks for and inviting the Kraut to raise his demands even higher.

- Moral indignity.
- Political indignity.
- Diplomatic indignity.
- A huge psychological error regarding the German character.

My polemic against M. Déat and his party was based on these four points.
L'Action française's entire polemic aroused a great deal of sympathy in Vichy among the Marshal's

entourage. But Déat's thesis had the backing of M. Laval, who protected him, to the great scandal of General Weygand, whose feelings were well known.
Déat finally gave up. He left Vichy for Paris. But the Laval clan, backed by Germany, sent Weygand to North Africa. This didn't change the Maréchal's policy one bit. In fact, it strengthened it, for Weygand practiced the "neither one nor the other" formula in Algiers, keeping everything in France. He delivered nothing.
That's why, Mr. President, members of the jury, we turned directly to the Marshal himself.
On October 11, 1940, Pujo and I raced to Vichy to deliver a note to the Head of State, outlining the folly, perhaps the worst, of a system in which the armistice was methodically denigrated as "fiction", and the advantages we had retained were offered to the occupier as being of no interest to us. The French had no right to joke about the "nono 34" zone; they might as well tell the Germans they'd better occupy it. We'd been obliged to carry out the hard part of the armistice; we shouldn't use the description for its advantage. On the contrary, we had to use Poincaré-style procedure,
clinging to the smallest clauses, as in any pact with someone stronger than ourselves.
The Marshal had authorized us to read this note. He asked us to keep it, had it typed up and read it over at length. The very next day, he said to his secretary:
- These gentlemen are right.
This showed the difference between his armistice of salvation and the armistice of treason.
We have every reason to believe that this well-founded denunciation was a factor in M. Laval's dismissal on December 13. Mr. Laval knew this so well that, on the eve of his defeat, he had tried to accuse us in the Council of Ministers, but without success. We were covered by the majority, then by the Marshal.
When the German Abetz, who had come to Vichy to help M. Laval, glanced through the newspapers, he stopped at L'Action française:
"La France, la France seule."
He added: "France alone will pay. This was confessed by Inter-France.
The Franco-German party and Montoire
We are anxious to come to this first fall of Laval, who fell from the second position of State to that of prisoner and accused, prison and accusation having fallen only on the intervention of the occupiers. But two issues must now be addressed. First, collaboration.
We won't understand anything about collaboration unless we have a clear idea of the frenzy of the Franco-German party, its passions and its interests.
How was this party formed? Its original nucleus must have been the remnants of Briand's former admirers, who were overwhelmingly pro-German. Berlin must have poured in a lot of money. A certain number of fools and madmen were recruited who believed in the white international, an old chimera that Bainville, Pujo and I have always fought against. We had to bring in large numbers of Cagoulards whom we had expelled from Action Française because of the absurdity of their conspiracy plans and their police collusion, visible to the naked eye. Finally, the small social clan of the Gobinists and the financiers of the "ja" party was completed by a large number of Communists; the considerable number of prosecutions, searches and sentences handed down in 1939 under Daladier, shows that through their propaganda, these allies of the Russians and Germans were disrupting workers' production and military organization. During the phoney war, during the invasion and since, these powerful factions have helped Germany.
Only, when the Germans won the war, this powerful faction wanted to be paid - in money, of course, but also in places, in influence with the occupying forces, in a share of power in the French government. The Germans believed this to be a useful tool, not realizing that their public allies of the previous day would become more odious to the French people the more they appeared as servants of the occupying

forces. The Germans thus committed the great folly of taking the parties of the foreigner as legitimate respondents and spokesmen for the defeated nation. They could have negotiated only with the Marshal, but his dignified and honorable resistance irritated and impatient them. They found it convenient to lean on these determined incendiaries, trying to impose an armistice that would deliver everything.
This added greatly to France's misfortunes. The interests, passions and political habits of the men in the party completed the ruins of the foreign war with a small, dry civil war, waged on the whole of French opinion, on its resistance, on those who embodied it, and by name on the Marshal and his loyal followers, such as ourselves, such as, later, the Legion, when the vast majority of the Legion had understood the situation and adhered to the sign of "France alone".
We are proud to have served, for four years, as the Turkish head of the Franco-German party.
Would you like to know what he had to say about us then?
I'll spare you thirteen pages. However, allow me to quote a few extracts and enjoy them.
In the Boche press in Paris, we read:
There can't not be deep and total agreement between Maurras and Churchill... . The collusion is obvious. Everything that is against Germany and the European revolution is in the Maurrasian camp. ...
The Jews of Vichy certainly responded with sure instinct and sincere enthusiasm to the fund-raising appeals of L'Action française. As for the Masons across the Channel, they are very good people. ...
Maurras' wrath is not for them.
(Déat, L'Œuvre, March 21, 1941).
L'Action française's slogan: "La France, la France seule" is a cover for Anglophilia, nothing more, and no one is fooled.
(Déat, L'Œuvre, April 9, 1941).
Charles Maurras and his followers would proceed with delay, but with savage joy, to some St. Bartholomew's Day, putting out of action those very people who were the pioneers of collaboration.
(Déat, L'Œuvre, May 8, 1941).
See how wrong he was, if we are to believe the accusation!... .
The headline in L'Action française, "La France, la France seule..." which provided the patriotic pretexts for the refusal of any European cooperation... .
(Déat, L'Œuvre, November 24, 1942).
Charles Maurras condemned the Légion des volontaires français contre le bolchevisme (French Volunteers against Bolshevism), as if he didn't want to give Stalin any grief, however light.
(Déat, L'Œuvre, July 26, 1941.)
Maurras worked feverishly to torpedo all Franco-German negotiations.
(Rebatet, Notre Combat, March 27, 1941.)
Etc. etc.
This is literature I'd rather spare you for the moment 35.
Note that we also have the counterpart, the same literature, but from London. I don't have the patience to review it.
Such was the intensity, one might say the enormity, of the effort made by the Franco-German party. This must be remembered if we are to understand the interview with Hitler at Montoire.
The interview was offered to the Marshal, not requested by him. It could have been a trap, but it was foiled by the very terms in which the Marshal announced the event to France.
His first word was to salute what the Franco-German party wanted to sacrifice at all costs: dignity, honor and the future. The Maréchal took on all the responsibilities of collaboration, reserving detailed management for himself, and admitting no other judge than history. He said: "Follow me", thereby excluding the agitations of individual wills. He was to add shortly afterwards: Follow me, don't overtake

me.
We fully embraced this unified, personal, cautious and reserved approach. Here is our commentary on the Montoire interview, as it appeared the very next day in our newspaper, which had just been transferred from Limoges to Lyon:
Collaboration
- Are you in favor of what the Marshal calls "collaboration"?
- I don't have to be a supporter.
- An opponent, then?
- Not at all.
- Neutral?
- Nor neutral.
- So you admit it?
- I don't have to admit it or discuss it.
And I quote the rest of the article:
We have, thank heaven, emerged from this regime of discussion in which everything went to pot because it could not receive any continuous direction; nothing held to anything, neither authority nor responsibility. Now that we've changed all that, the country has to reap the benefits.
In the past, we could not hesitate for a moment to take on global and tragic responsibilities in the absolute absence of any government or state. Where the State exists, where it does its job, our duty is twofold: firstly, to let it do so, and secondly, to facilitate it.
In order to let it do its job, we must not interfere with the essential core of its activity, which is the free choice of policy between the various systems that are or are not available; in order to facilitate it, we must multiply our efforts to gather around it the greatest possible number of good citizens, to create an atmosphere of absolute confidence, to bring it the enormous strength that comes from the positive adhesion of the multitudes when they are organized and directed by a powerful breath.
But there's no need to deliberate on the substance of his action - that would be pure anarchy.
France's greatest misfortune would be if people were to take sides for or against "collaboration", and if opposing factions were to form on the subject; this dispersion and diversion would be disastrous for us.
Everything must go towards retrenchment and tightening up.
The Marshal is responsible. He said it admirably.
Let's understand...
Then my future interlocutor would say:
- But if...
- There's no if. First, concentration. Think only of France, the only France... That's who we have to work for.
The healthy and useful action of the public mind must, consequently, have as its object to contribute to strengthening the mechanism of the pivot on which everything rolls and turns, the political tendency itself being put out of the question.
Since it is its own affair, we must ensure that the State's maneuvering, whatever it may be, is as strong and flexible as possible, and that its performance is as successful as possible. If the direction chosen by the Head of State is perfect, its good results will be accelerated and increased by the country's support. If some error has crept in at the starting point, the flexibility and solidity of the State machine will be able to attenuate and compensate for it, thanks to the same support.
Everything can have drawbacks, or serious defects. Some worse, some lesser. And time blows on this.
Before Mers el-Kébir, we could hesitate and stagnate, or reflect indefinitely. There, the bloody dice were thrown at us as insolently as a gauntlet by the London Government, and the blows of the furious

campaign thrust straight at the head and heart of France, at her government, manifested the will to strike us a new French revolution. All we had to do was march against London, against its radio, against its evil and perfidious foolishness. So we had a kind of choice on that side. On the other hand, there were other currents and other reactions that had to be taken into account.
- But what do you think of the choice we made?
- I wasn't present at the deliberations, I didn't see the file; I don't think anything. And that doesn't deprive me, given that, firstly, I have a few other little things to think about, and, secondly, that it would be odious for me to think wrongly, without the necessary elements to think rightly; thirdly, that we have a duty to apply all our thinking to immediate, necessary and urgent matters where it can render good and useful services, such as the effort and art of giving the Government in charge all the material and moral support to sustain its high responsibilities. The whole of France must be behind it. For the time being, this serious work of rallying people is the first and only chance of salvation.
Vital principle: the leader must be able to make his policy, under the optimum conditions of the country's attitude and movement. Let's support him, let's acclaim him, there is no other method to help keep France's vessel firmly between the zone of its greatest good, which remains attingible, and that of the lesser evil, in which it can always save itself.
This is why, speaking yesterday as a father, the Marshal has resolved to speak as a leader, a leader and a doctor, whose supreme lesson is confidence in eternal France.
L'Action française, November 1, 1940.
We never wavered from this line: collaboration was the Maréchal's business. We had neither to discuss it, nor to support it, nor even to declare ourselves neutral. We followed the Head of State, the competent judge in all matters.
But, as we must always remember, this did not sit well with the Franco-German party, nor with M. Sordet, M. Déat or M. Laval. So they unleashed their system, which was to organize and spread written and oral propaganda in favor of collaboration, putting the problems of French foreign policy on fairground stages, in cafés and in the streets. We protested violently against what had to be called "colaborationism".
Minds accustomed to seeing everything, to putting everything on the electoral, parliamentary, journalistic or tribune level, had trouble understanding this difference. All it took was a moment's reflection to grasp it: let the Marshal do what was his business, but do nothing to disguise or caricature as international demagoguery what was an article of national policy and national defense. Only the Leader could limit collaboration to the national interest. Only the Leader could prevent it from degenerating into a campaign of voluntary French subordination to German hegemony. Volumes of explanations were given by us in this sense, and dominated by the need not to allow France to be divided into two clans: one foreigner's party and another foreigner's party.
France had to quickly unite its interests when its foreign partners were hiding their game and saying nothing about their intentions.
The essence of L'Action française's policy is borne out by two facts. Two of our former friends came to Lyon to engage in collaborationism. We immediately made it known what separated us from them.
On June 8, 1941, L'Action française published the following note:
About a conference
We have been asked to insert an announcement of a conference on "New Europe and France" to be held in Lyon, by an eminent man who has been a great friend to us.
His name is Georges Claude.
We have never ceased to esteem in him, along with the high value of the scholar, a generous patriotism. However, we have refused to include him, firstly because, in the campaign he is waging today, the

speaker has links with French people for whom we can have no esteem; and secondly, because, as things stand, we feel that our resources do not allow us to make plans for Europe, when France alone is asking us to do so; finally, because we are, today as yesterday, the opponents of appeals to opinion, of diplomacy in the public square, the clearest result of which should be to provoke contradiction and disorder in people's minds.

France's greatest misfortune would be if parties were formed over foreign policy issues. This is the great peril. In our opinion, silence is the only solution for citizens, in matters where the competent government alone has a say. This is the only way to ensure that the Government has complete freedom of action.

A. F.

On February 18, 1942, L'Action française published the following note:

Answer to a question

On the occasion of an announced conference, a few people have asked us about our relations with M. Brasillach, who was a contributor to our literary page and who, having been released as a prisoner of war, has taken over as editor-in-chief of Je suis partout in Paris.

As we have already had occasion to do on the subject of his newspaper, we reply that we no longer have any dealings with Mr. Robert Brasillach.

A. F.

A clearer idea of our position can be gained from these three letters exchanged between the president of one of our sections and a Ligueur of his obedience, who had to be crossed out:

This June 13, 1942.

Monsieur le Président,

I have the honor and duty to inform you that, at the request of the Paris "Collaboration" group and as an active member of that group, I have agreed to introduce Professor Grimm... .

- Un Boche!

... at his lecture on Tuesday, current 16th.

I have no doubt that I am in full agreement with you, since the need for this collaboration has been made clear by the Marshal and is entering an active phase of realization with the present government of France.

Yours sincerely

- Reply from the President of the "Amis de L'Action française" of. . . :

June 25, 1942.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of June 13, I have the pleasure of sending you a clipping from the newspaper L'Action française, dated November 1, 1940, in which Charles Maurras has clearly defined for his readers the line of conduct on the precise point you are questioning.

It is clear enough; to deviate from it is to automatically deviate from the group of our friends.

I would add that just as this article is binding on all of us as Friends of L'Action Française, it is particularly binding on me as Chairman. I shall be obliged to comply.

Yours sincerely

- Furious reply from M. X. :

July 20, 1942.

Dear Sir

I received your letter of June 25, replying to my letter of June 13 with an article by M. Charles Maurras dated November 1, 1940, which appeared in the newspaper L'Action française.

At the time, I had read this surprising article, which struck me for its lack of positive conclusions.

At the time, along with some of our friends, I deplored the position taken by the master against the idea of collaboration.
If the wait-and-see attitude could be seen as a system that could be useful to the country in the aftermath of the armistice, events since then no longer allow this easy retreat from action.
An irresponsible, anonymous wait-and-see attitude did not serve France's interests during the empty period of the last fifteen months (Laval's absence).
The revered Head of State has given back to the country his testimony to the necessity of this collaboration.
You are beaming at those who are courageously trying to make it possible, if there is still time.
In the glorious days of the A.F., when so much enthusiasm and hope were, alas, without a future, there was no room for equivocation. It pains me to note that this essential quality no longer seems to be accepted by the party to which I have had the honor of belonging and believing.
Yours sincerely
You see, this Ligueur excommunicated us because we weren't collaborationists!
Needless to say, the author of this letter had read neither the Maréchal's writings and speeches, nor mine. He arrogated to himself the right to surpass the Maréchal by mistaking our discipline and trust for equivocation!
Our relations with our former friends from Je suis partout, when they switched to collaborationism, are proof of Action Française's unchanging altitude.
In the very early days of June 1940, when Messrs Lesca and Laubreaux were arrested by Mandel's order on an undeserved charge of treason (they were only accused of having spoken out against the government), I protested against this abuse of power, mingled with proboches like Serpeille de Gobineau and Fabre-Luce. Unfortunately for the editors of Je suis partout, the German victory diverted them from their duties, and they began to join the White International, preferring Nazi ideology to the realities of the wounded Fatherland. We immediately placed them on the same footing as those who had abandoned France to follow democratic ideology. In the summer of 1940, M. Rebatet and M. Laubreaux, in the cafés of Vichy, were ranting violently against the "illusions" of L'Action française and the petty perspectives of its petty politics. They were doing something big! Back in Paris, they wanted to relaunch Je suis partout, but, still fearing us, director Lesca sent a messenger to Lyon to ask my opinion on this reappearance. My reply was categorical and violent:
"There's no way a newspaper can keep its honor in Paris right now. This paper will be in German hands. Adieu, Monsieur."
The messenger reported the reply and, as far as he was concerned, withdrew from the newspaper 36 .
The others ignored him and raged against L'Action française and against me. Rebatet's filthy book, Les Décombres, did me the honor of dragging me through the same mud as the Army and the Fatherland. Laval's Censorship would not allow me to respond, except in the form of a mutilated article (November 1942).
According to the Parisian press, which had sold out to Berlin, the failure of Laval's pro-Boche campaign was entirely due to us: Maurrassism equaled wait-and-see attitude, which equaled anti-collaborationism.
There was no maurrassisme. Charles Maurras behaved as he should, as a good Frenchman, absolutely loyal to the Maréchal, but with no reason to overtake him for the benefit of a foreign power.
M. Laval's dismissal on December 13, 1940
As we saw above, our reactions had been in line with the Marshal's feelings on Laval's policy a few weeks before he was dismissed. There was much discussion about the terms of his dismissal; we had no reservations, as we did not live in Vichy, but we welcomed the removal of a dangerous man as a public

blessing.
Remaining in the country and multiplying his intrigues, he was able to prepare, with the support of the Boche, his disastrous return in 1942.
In between (December 1940 to April 1942), the German press in Paris, loyal to Laval, launched the most abusive and violent attacks against me. So as not to cause further difficulties for the Marshal's government, I refrained from returning to Vichy periodically, as I had done in the first half of the year.
At the beginning of 1941, General Huntziger and his wife, with whom I had a personal relationship, married their son; they did me the honor of inviting me to the Saint-Louis de Vichy ceremony. I asked them to excuse me because of these campaigns. As for me, I was happy to wear the Boches and pro-Boches insults, but I didn't want to expose the Minister of War or the Head of State to them. The Marshal had been informed of the reasons for my abstention by a military leader of our friends, and had given me his approval.
I thus retained total freedom of movement, committed no one and could serve the cause of French Unity, without invoking any responsibilities other than those I was taking on.
Right from the start of the new state, we had laid down the principle that we would serve freely. We asked for nothing, neither for ourselves nor for others.
We gave tangible and material proof of this freedom later, in 1941, when the government made the folded newspapers accept a monthly payment of 275,000 to 300,000 francs, allowing them to cover their expenses. We refused; our readers, our subscribers, our advertising, the generosity of our friends, the selflessness of our contributors, enabled us to honor our commitments, without any official help.
And this did not prevent us from energetically supporting the policy of social reform initiated by the Maréchal and his devoted ministers, men of talent and experience, who were concerned with the status of the Family and the Craft, the Labor Charter, the Peasant Corporation, and all the rebuilding of a new France. Travail, Famil le, Patrie, it's true that this useful and sensible effort was much mocked in the Paris press. But what do you expect? It was French, not German!
In Paris, everything went on as if M. Laval had continued to be the head of the government. It was his great thought of July-August that was being put into circulation, his myth of future Europe, the false nose of German Europe.
Then our daily discussions broke out with the German newspaper from Lyon, L'Effort, which kept caressing vague plans for the day when the continent would be federated, or confederated in Berlin. We scoffed at this hypothesis, pointing out its inanity and, as far as possible, its danger.
In the winter of 1941-1942, a banquet was held in Lyon for a friendly magazine, Frontières 37 . I chaired the banquet. I was asked to say a few words at the end of this meeting, which was private in nature (around thirty people) but where there was a risk of unintentional leaks. It seems to me that I explained, once again, the difference between collaboration as seen and led by the Marshal, who alone is accountable to history, and the dangerous collaborationism to which some fools or wretches were inviting us. What I am sure of are my last words. Here they are, in all their ironic clarity:
"A Europe dominated by a great Germany! Gentlemen, if I knew a reasonable man, educated, thoughtful, aware of history, informed about the character of the Germans, and who believed that this great Germany could be a factor of order and peace in Europe, well, Gentlemen, this man, if he existed, I would overwhelm him with testimonies of admiration in which there would be, as the etymology goes, much astonishment. But I don't know this man, and I don't believe he exists...".
And such was the general opinion of this homogeneous milieu of like-minded friends.
At the time I'm talking about, discussions, reservations, mockery of the so-called "New Europe", or differences made between "Collaborationism" and "Collaboration", could filter through our newspaper in one form or another. The censors quibbled over details, but the essential was left untouched. You

only have to look at our collections to see that.
Things became a little different, thanks to the Germans, when Germany declared war on Russia in 1941. The myth of German Europe was joined by the fable of the Crusade against Communism. We didn't agree to preach it, nor to teach that Germany had become the disinterested champion of civilization against barbarism; we criticized it very directly when the Légion des volontaires français contre le bolchevisme (L. V. F.) entered the southern zone. L'Action française was immediately able to express its absolute hostility. In the name of France alone, it criticized the entry of volunteers into the line, alongside and under the uniform of the occupying forces. This criticism, expressed for as long as the censors would let it, particularly irritated Doriot's supporters. On March 27, 1943, Maurice Giffard, one of them, wrote in an issue of Notre Combat devoted entirely to me, in which I was insulted in every line:
When the L. V. F. was created eighteen months ago, only a small number of us in the unoccupied zone associated ourselves with this initiative. The Action Française immediately did us the honor of accusing us of Francophobia. The Grand Master of Occitanism himself (I'm told it's me) even insisted on elegantly calling us death volunteers and revealing that France is not defended in the Ukraine, but on the Rhine and nowhere else.
Naturally, this also earned us violent attacks from L'Émancipation nationale, which had taken up the German cross and whose heroism 38 was warmly praised by the Kraut press in Paris. Here again, they appealed to our ideas of domestic politics and tried to recruit us into a white International with the swastika: - You're for order, for property, for respect for beliefs, and you don't want us to fight your worst enemies. Our constant response was: "It's not in the far east of Europe that we need to fight communism, it's at home. Let's put our own house in order; let the State, its police and its administration hunt down domestic Communism, let them keep an eye on Moscow's agents, the gold of the Urals, and they'll do their duty. This is the only way we will understand this debate and this fight. We've never understood it any other way, and often our attacks on domestic communism were a detour to distance the French from the false Crusade. Neither the urgings of a few distraught conservatives, nor, later, those of Laval's government, when it was back in power, changed a single line. In December 1942, as I was visiting Vichy when they were trying to get the Marshal to agree to some kind of inclined plane that would lead to close military collaboration with Germany in Africa, I took the liberty of asking the Marshal what was true about this rumor. Nothing," he replied. We won't repeat the mistake we made in the East. ... I couldn't contain my joy.
In February 1943, M. Bonnefoy, General Secretary of Information, came to Lyons to explain the beauties of the Crusade undertaken against the Bolshevism threatening Central Europe; he gave a lecture to the representatives of the Lyons press, inviting us to show the French ourselves what an immense service Germany was rendering us, and how grateful we should be. My colleague Auphan, beside me, was writing down Mr. Bonnefoy's words. I punctuated each sentence with the same mid-voiced exclamation: - C'est idiot! C'est idiot! When he had finished, I asked to speak, and, apologizing to our Lyonnais colleagues, our hosts, invoking my age and my status as dean, I rebutted Mr. Bonnefoy; I replied that the Bolshevist danger, real as it was, was neither immediate nor inevitable, and that the French would always be less sensitive to it than to the evil they were currently suffering, which was the occupation, with its humiliations, exactions, rapines and rigors of all kinds. You tell a child that there's a big rabid dog behind the hedge that will bite him; but the dog may not be rabid, the hedge may not be crossed, or the dog may not bite. But what the child knows for sure is that he has lice on his body, which make him scratch, and that the big enemy for him are the "totos" (the "totos", i.e. the occupiers).
M. Bonnefoy, having also spoken of the relief, I added that instead of trying to sweeten the pill for the French people, it would be better to tell them the truth, namely that it was a new servitude that the

victor demanded of the vanquished.
Our colleagues present approved of my words, and several intervened to support them. Mr. Bonnefoy, discomfited, could only reply rather piteously that people were very difficult to govern! The meeting was adjourned. Mr Bonnefoy, who had heard my "c'est idiot" perfectly, held back Auphan to ask him if the word applied to him. Our dear friend and co-defendant will tell you more 39 .

The American question (1941)

The logic of my presentation obliged me to anticipate the facts. But much of 1941 was dominated by concern for America.
It already seemed certain that America was going to intervene on England's side; it was already helping in any case. The problem was to ensure that France did not suffer. Japan, allied with Germany, was not at war with Russia. Why would America, an ally of England, campaign against France?
This was the overriding reason behind the policy pursued by sensible patriots and the Marshal's (then free) government.
For this reason, Pujo and I attended the banquet hosted by France-Amérique for the American ambassador, Admiral Leahy. This was the reason for a number of articles in which American policy was examined and supported with open-mindedness and sympathy for Mr. Roosevelt, and in which I expressed the gratitude deserved by Admiral Leahy, a generous contributor to French supplies. These various articles of mine were even severely censored under German surveillance.
The Marshal's wise policy was not without fruit, since at the end of December 1941, when America entered the war, it did not break with France, and left its ambassador in Vichy, where he remained for more than six months. L'Action française recognized, in this policy of the Chief, our exclusive general interest: France alone.
But all these nuances, these precautions, these reservations, all these successive points of retreat had to be sacrificed by the return to power of a brutal pro-Boche government, that of M. Laval, in April 1942.

M. Laval's return to power

It would be ridiculous to waste time debating whether this return was imposed by the Germans. M. Laval is skilful enough, when it's all about him, to secure every mask and alibi. When, at that moment, Le Temps announced that major changes in "foreign" policy were in the offing, "leave us alone", I replied, as we had heard about the project, "and it's not foreign policy, it's domestic policy that's going to change". And the outcast, the sad outcast of December 13, 1940, was quick to testify to the grace from which he benefited. One of his first acts, one of his first words, was his awful, shameful declaration that he believed in German victory and wanted it. Shortly afterwards, he was granted full powers and governmental responsibilities. The position of the Marshal, who had already taken note of his "semi-liberty", became simply that of a constitutional sovereign, who reigned, but governed less and less.
As disciplined citizens, we had no business adding insult to injury at a time when the country was in dire straits. But, on the other hand, our loyalty to the Marshal never wavered or wavered, and we never ceased to emphasize, with increasing force, that he was the flag of French unity, and that it was around him that we had to rally. Laval back to the regime to which we had subjected him before his fall in 1940, a sort of quarantine in which we then set about ignoring him, as M. Bergeret ignored Mme Bergeret in Anatole France's tale, and went back to pretending he didn't exist. There were very few instances where, apart from the press releases inserted by force, M. Laval's name was mentioned in the part of the newspaper that was personal to us; it was only in cases where it was important to leave him in charge of the measures discussed. The only people we knew to greet, approve and applaud him was the State, in other words its leader, the Marshal.
Once Laval was back in power, new catastrophes began.
America made the act of hostility it had shied away from until then. Then, Laval's pro-German frenzy,

and his policy in line with Parisian rantings, exasperated French opinion more and more, and, unfortunately, instead of uniting at the center, under the national flag around the Father of the Fatherland, French opinion rushed to the opposite pole, and compensated for Laval's collaborationism with an increasingly marked favor for dissidence. We had tried everything to ward off this calamity. It was becoming clearer and worse. France was being divided into two foreign clans, and increasingly so; the harm they were doing to each other is unimaginable, for it was a harm done to the entire Patrie.
To the very end, we railed against this error, the direct offspring of all the errors made by M. Laval and his Parisian accomplices, errors which were to lead to the surrender of North Africa, and, as an inescapable consequence, to extend the German occupation to the whole territory, to suppress the small armistice army, to force our fleet to scuttle, in short to annihilate almost all the material power left to us by the debacle of 1940. We lost all the seeds of a free future that were included in the June 1940 positions.
Up until then, these positions had led all thoughtful minds to say that it was inevitable that France would have its say, and that it would be able to say it when the belligerents had weakened and perhaps exhausted themselves. I had put forward this thesis at a meeting in Cannes; the next day, I had the great satisfaction of seeing one of our highest military authorities, who was unaware of my feelings, come to confide in me the same personal conviction. The following autumn, in Marseille, in a lecture to the "Friends of L'Action française", I developed the idea that we still had a diplomatic or military future, perhaps even a diplomatic and military one, on this side of the Atlantic, which the bloody sacrifices made by Germany on the Russian side of the Eastern Front and on the British side of the African Front had assured us. An hour later, on my way back to Martigues, the text of a telephone call that had arrived during my absence brought me the first rumors of the Algerian surrender.
The main thrust of the Marshal's policy was over. And for what?
The following day, November 11, 1942, I drove sadly back to Lyon, passing convoys and trains of Germans who had come to occupy the southern zone, without being able to put up the slightest roadblock. What a bitter lesson for France! I thought to myself. A lesson in military strength, a lesson in political coherence. Germany had responded (alas, all too easily) to the colonial violation of the armistice with a metropolitan violation. These regions of Lyonnais, Dauphiné, Languedoc and Provence have since been regained, but it would have been better not to start by losing them outright. And in front of the display of enemy weaponry, I was reminded of our long years of voluntary disarmament, or negligence, or ignorance of the enemy. In 1937, 1938 and 1939, the irresistible logic of the enemy's response had been preceded by the carelessness and disjointedness of our offensive movements. The least we can say about the African operations of 1942 is that they were neither subordinated nor coordinated, nor even ordered from a national point of view.
For the operations to be subordinated, they would have had to have been carried out in concert with the Marshal, and for him to have judged the moment favorable and the time ripe. This was avoided.
For the operations to be coordinated, the executors would have had to be in agreement with each other; and those who have followed the story of the Murphy-Giraud-Darlan 39 reports in Anglo-American newspapers know that this agreement was lacking on the eve, in the middle and at the end of the operation.
For the operation to have been ordered in the national interest, the German force would not yet have reached that point of integrity where it remained master of dealing with the metropolis as it was able to do from then on.
During the long seasons of 1942-1943-1944, the Germans were able to tighten their demands at will, to redouble their rigors without any limit other than their own good pleasure, which until then had met the terms of the pact concluded with the Marshal. And the Maréchal never failed to remind them

forcefully. He knew how to make people listen. It was not he who lost this game; the events that took it away from him were those for which he had neither been consulted nor obeyed.
The damage done to France therefore increased, and yet the Marshal never achieved what was desired in Berlin and in the Berlin press in Paris: neither military cooperation nor a declaration of war on Great Britain. Just as he had been faithful to his armistice duties towards Germany, he observed those duties which forbade us to surrender our fleet and fight against our former British allies. German persecution obtained nothing, either by securing Weygand's person, or by attacking the Marshal's freedom, as it did on August 20, 1944. He was inflexible, and honor was preserved.
Even the most painful provocations and damage, such as the bombardment of cities, the sack of Normandy, repeated offensives on the capital of France, the reduction of Toulon to Pompeii, and the various ravages of the Mediterranean coast, were resisted, always in the name of honor and loyalty to the assurances given. The Marshal had said in 1940: I will not march against the English; he did not march against England, and those who followed him supported the same principle as he did.
For example, we were not at fault in joining our voices to the curses, laden with reminders of the law of nations, raised under the shells by common sense, justice and the national interest. It's all too easy to say that these misfortunes were caused by the liberation, and that the end wanted the means; these are the cries of survivors. The dead were not consulted; the opinions of the other victims, the wounded, the inhabitants of the demolished houses and the farmers of the devastated fields were not sought. Many of those who had the joy and happiness of seeing the French flag flying at last nevertheless retain the right to have preferred less onerous and less cruel methods of liberation. The national interest, the respect due to members of the Patrie, could have been the object of more careful calculations and less brutal efforts. Those who have the good of the country at heart above all, have the right to stop, to reflect, and to reserve themselves; history will answer.
One question dominates all: why has war been brought back to the already sore soil of France? Why did we make such a grand tour of the farthest frontiers of her Empire? Why wasn't Germany attacked directly by the powers of the sea? The North Sea is shorter than the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. When Germany felt threatened towards Aachen, it withdrew its troops from the Rhone valley; it would have done so much more quickly if Bremen, Hamburg or Berlin had been threatened as early as 1942 or 1943.
We had always announced two things:
- German occupation would become more rigorous as German power suffered more setbacks;
- Laval's government would become flatter as German rigor increased.

An example of both. In the winter of 1943-1944, our friends in Spain asked for conferences from me. I wanted nothing better than to serve France well over there, as I had done in Switzerland. I applied to the French government for a passport. To my astonishment, the Laval government told me to find out for myself from the Germans whether or not they would grant me a visa. I replied that this was not my role, and that it was up to the French authorities to prepare my passport if they had no objections, and to send it to the occupiers for visa, who would accept or refuse it as they saw fit.
This strange procedure was maintained despite various requests to Vichy. Despite the astonishment of the Regional Prefect, Mr. Angeli 40, the Laval administration wanted to force me to make a personal approach to the Germans. I formally refused and gave up the trip to Spain. Had Laval intended to set a trap for me? Or had he simply, out of fear and baseness, made himself more subordinate to the Germans? or had the Germans increased their demands? Anything is possible. One thing is certain: Laval was making less and less distinction between a French subject and a German subject.
French workers leave for Germany
Already, as a result of their setbacks in the East, the Germans, outraged by the small number of our

"volunteers against Bolshevism", were threatening to force us to send civilian workers to their country. At first sight, the reaction of L'Action française had outstripped even that of the cardinals who had protested in the name of the law of nations. We tried to print two or three times that it was a question of re-establishing slavery.

The censors treated us like princes of the Church, and we had to confine ourselves to discussing modes of iniquity.

These were serious questions of fact. Either Germany would take the men it needed on authority, or it would obtain them from the French government in exchange for prisoners it would release. Since Germany had the forces at its disposal, it was better to exchange our men than give them up for nothing. We pointed out, however, that it was unworthy of France to allow three French workers to free just one prisoner. Someone other than Laval might have obtained a proportion less contemptuous of French honor and the dignity of the working class. It was no less certain that it was better to release a single prisoner than none at all.

Another point of view: were the young Frenchmen who evaded their government's call taking a single worker away from Germany? No, since another was taken in his place; and often, instead of a free young man with his future ahead of him, a father was taken, leaving his family in distress. We saluted the heroes who took the place of those who had failed; we blamed those who, in order to escape the yoke, threw it back on the shoulders of their brothers. In both cases, we were sadly doing our duty in the name of French interest and honor. To those we saw leaving, we didn't say that they were going to serve German civilization against Russian barbarism, or to put themselves at the service of a magnificent population of masters and kings, we told them that it was a hard test, but that it had to be undergone to avoid harder evils for the rest of France 41.

Instigators, militia, rebels, courts-martial

It's true, we were against those who, without personal risk, covered by their condition or character, instigated these failures.

These instigations were often accompanied by dirty slanders against French people who were neither pro-Boche nor collaborationists: the French anti-Semites. French anti-Semites, in particular, were subjected to these misleading slanders. When the war-mongering Jews of 1939 had plunged France into that abyss of sorrow, it was already daring to associate their cause with that of national civilization; in any case, it was absolutely false to equate anti-Semitism with Nazism. Abbé Barruel, who lived in the eighteenth century, Bonald, Gouguenot des Mousseaux, Toussenel, who lived at the beginning of the nineteenth, Drumont and La Tour du Pin, who lived at the end of the same century, the Action française school and its state, legal and human anti-Semitism, owe absolutely nothing to German anti-Semitism, that ferocious anti-Semitism of the skin. To confuse them was an evil deed, contrary to the truth, to the glory of the Fatherland and to public peace.

But what were these initial irritations compared to the immense, terrorist disorder that followed? Excitement of civil hatred and civic indiscipline could have no other effect: armed robbery, a veritable epidemic of murder, insecurity that panicked towns and countries. Could this be tolerated? No state would have allowed it. No public opinion would have stood for it. That's why we always and everywhere demanded respect for order. But we were careful to stipulate, by State means, under State responsibility, and not in private forms. Naturally, it was not possible for M. Laval, nor his advisors or civil servants, to take over the direction and authority of repression with a firm hand. They preferred combinations in which responsibilities would be shared according to the parliamentary method; relying on more or less voluntary gangs dispensed them from taking the police and justice into their own hands, organizing them and purifying them, if need be. That's why we never ceased to criticize them, sometimes openly, sometimes covertly, saying that the struggle of volunteers for order against

volunteers for disorder on the face of the Patrie was called civil war.
At the very least, these bands and parties had to be protected from contamination by German forces. Our dossier shows the positions taken by L'Action française
on the various "auxiliary police", as they were called in 1940, drawn from the Legion (Volontaires nationaux, Service d'ordre légionnaire); we felt they were poorly used, poorly commanded, too dominated by Laval and his men. One of these men, Darnand, was put in charge of the newly-founded Milice. When he came to Lyon in the autumn of 1943, he gave a speech in which he refrained from any foreign policy, declaring that the aim of the new organization was exclusively the defense of internal order, using French means. In my article of the following day, I supported this last condition, and congratulated Darnand on this program.
However, we did not urge our friends to join the Militia. Three or four of them had us say or write that, asked to take on a local command, they had accepted so as not to leave a group of young men of good will in other, dangerous or suspicious hands. We replied that it was their business, but that they should at least take advantage of their activity to speak up to their leaders, not to accept every order they received, and to formally refuse those that went beyond their commitment. We knew that many of them were very hostile to the pro-Boche and Lavalian tendencies. At that time, the fight against the terrorists had not yet begun; the Militia was not yet armed, nor accepted in the northern zone. Others, without consulting us, had joined the Milice, knowing that by doing so they were separating themselves from us. Others thought they were staying with us all the same.
We soon learned that Darnand, having broken his promises in Lyon, had turned to foreign policy, to German policy. He had made a deal with the Waffen-SS, supplying them with men and arms. From then on, no one could hesitate. The Militia had become an international body, incompatible with the principle of France alone42 .
Pujo and I were told: "But every day, French veterans, wounded, cited and decorated, are murdered, farms looted, harvests set on fire, poor mayoral secretaries killed for refusing to deliver their commune's food stakes. Shouldn't we defend ourselves?
We replied:
- Not with German weapons.
- It's impossible to have them any other way.
- This is not the only impasse in the situation. If the regular police are powerless, it's even better not to take the place of the Germans. Anything rather than civil war.
But then we learned that the Milice had links with Déat and the pro-Boches. It was beginning to be said that some militiamen were becoming auxiliaries and torturers of the Gestapo. Those of us who had joined the Milice were told to leave as soon as possible. Many had already done so spontaneously; others had fallen victim. In all circumstances, we refused to take part in the civil war that was opening up, reserving ourselves for the reconciliation and unity of the French people.
In every case, we insisted on the moral and political necessity of returning to the State what belonged to the State.
We could not accept assassinations without motive, without pretext, without excuse, such as those of our friends Pierre Médan, Deloye, La Fléchère, Commandant de La Roque, Colonel de Boysson, Doctor Top, irreproachable Frenchmen, valiant soldiers, often combatants in both wars or escaped prisoners. We could not tolerate the massacre of children in their cradles, of old women in their homes, as in Voiron, of the wounded in their beds, as was the case of M. Verdier in his hospital bed, under the eyes of his wife and sister-in-law, who also died there, some purely innocent, others only guilty of not having wanted to sacrifice the interests of the Patrie to the interests of factists or foreigners.
We are madly accused of denunciations. Lies! We have never raised anything but complaints. We have

asked for just protection against all forms of pillage and devastation, but we have never failed to insist that simple rebels should not have to suffer the treatment of criminals. We have always made allowances for noble and generous errors, for misguided sentiments, which have turned patriots against the inner peace of the Fatherland. Anyone who has read us will know that we have always made these distinctions for ourselves, and recommended them to others. No human society, not even French, could withstand the regime of terror we have tried to impose on it. We have called for the use of all appropriate means to eliminate these extremes.

Insofar as they took the place of the failing regular courts, courts-martial were the appropriate means of repressing certain crimes. Insofar as they pursued passions of pure vindictiveness or civil strife, courts-martial were products of the same anarchy from which assassinations had sprung. Some of the excesses committed led us to advocate a return to regular procedures, as expressed in one of our last articles of 1944.

But let's not be hypnotized by the effects, Mr. Chairman and members of the jury. Let's not take our eyes off the causes, and the greater cause: this dreadful anarchy arose entirely from the French defeat, and therefore from this unprepared war, and therefore from the determination to undertake it of those whom I had so vainly tried to stop and warn against their passions, their drive and their ignorance.

This anarchy, born of war, was indisputably aggravated by the Franco-German party's attempts to replace an armistice of salvation with an armistice of treason, the armistice that was to eliminate all revenge and all future. I was vilified by the Franco-German party from the outset, and for four years, without pause or respite. This is my first honor. My second honor is to be able to add that I did this party of traitors all the harm I could.

The same anarchy, born of the Germans and their party, was further aggravated by the absurd ambition of the most incompetent, but most devious of our public men, M. Pierre Laval. His weakness, his incapacity, the naive way in which he confused the politics of corridors with the politics of nations, his successive betrayals, had made him Germany's all-rounder, and he had also secured, it should not be forgotten, the complicity of many former administrators of the Third Republic, operating from within and without, for Laval against the Marshal, whose German support enabled him to gradually replace himself in political action. But the newspaper took every precaution to ensure that no one could believe it was capable of giving the slightest personal credit to M. Laval. To the naive people who sometimes asked me in person or in writing why I never named Mr. Laval, I simply laughed and said "learn to read". Those who knew could see, despite the censorship, the watermark that showed him to be the creature and puppet of the Germans.

Among the perpetrators of the same pro-German anarchy, there was M. Laval's currency, and we always treated it like its master, and for the same reason, M. Doriot and the others. The more rigorous occupation made our language less free; it was neither less clear-cut nor less motivated. When, in April 1944, M. Doriot and his followers came to demonstrate in Lyon, I wrote the following article:

Demonstrations and exhibitions

We have often explained ourselves on the question of defense against Bolshevism. We have said again and again that in France's present state, with its semi-freedom and almost total disarmament, the anti-Communist struggle must be waged within its borders, and seriously pursued with all the means available to the public authorities. We were the first to call for this fight, and we are not suspected of wanting to diminish its just vigor.

Other French people think differently. They believe that the line of defense lies to the east, in the farthest reaches of Eastern Europe, and that there is a kind of duty to send our fellow citizens there. This policy, in our opinion, is not commensurate with our means, it is clearly disproportionate to them, and it cannot bring us the expected moral results. When the King of Sardinia sent La Marmora's small brigade

to the Crimea to stand shoulder to shoulder with the English and French armies, he had full sovereignty in his kingdom, and his "gesture" (hardly more than a gesture, indeed), could be credited to the young, reborn Italy. This practical sovereignty no longer belongs to France, and the merit that a certain number of French volunteers claim to accumulate on their heads cannot be extended to the nation as a whole; it belongs to the pro-German French alone. So what's the point? We can eternally distinguish between them and their brothers, and this will only serve to accentuate the division and separation. I don't think this is what France needs.

This is our opinion. We don't pretend to impose it. It is defended by reason. Others have a different opinion. They came to proclaim it and demonstrate it yesterday and the day before in Lyon. That was their business. Not ours. But it must be said that their words exceeded their thoughts, and their actions their intentions. One of the speakers exclaimed that one head of a faithful Frenchman was worth ten heads of unfaithful Frenchmen. The cold-blooded patriot who reported these words to me (our friend Auphan) merely added that that made eleven French heads sacrificed, and that it would have been better to keep them on their eleven pairs of shoulders.

These are our objections to the formula launched from Lyon on Wednesday evening, and we don't believe they can be easily resolved.

We have perhaps more serious objections to the public attitude of the demonstrators I'm talking about. Yesterday I went to see them up close, in the street they were holding, which is our street. As an old specialist and participant in all kinds of riots, I have never seen a more cruelly and shamefully provocative attitude towards a silent and cold multitude that was in no way threatening. The demonstrators were under the moral and material patronage of the occupiers' enormous forces. They also had the immediate, and quite natural, material protection of the French police. What did they fear? What could they fear? And what were these half-dozen young men in blue shirts doing there, in this bare, open space that only streetcars could cross, coming and going, lounging, scrambling around, acting as if they were guarding this wide open space, brandishing some sort of large syringe called a "machine gun", which they pointed in the exact direction of the most harmless of audiences? The onlookers neither circulated nor dispersed (because onlookers never circulate or disperse, even under bombs), and this double game - the "tarasconnade" of some, the stubborn passivity of others - could have led to more than serious incidents had they occurred (fortunately they didn't), whose fault would it have been if not for the superfluous display of instruments of civil war?

And in conclusion, I invited Le Pays to reflect on the "moral gap" thus created between "the threatening and the threatened", the "fixed or mobile spectators, many of whom clenched their fists in indignation, and the parade of boasts". I urged "Messrs Laval, Henriot and Darnand" to take heed, and even to try to "make the occupiers understand"... . . On condition that they understood it themselves! So, right up to the last hour, I kept on multiplying my efforts. They were so feared on the German side that the Lyon regional censor deferred the article on April 7, 1944, and the central censor refused it on the following April 10. Here, it was not enough to be the cause of anarchy. We had become volunteers for anarchy. And I continued to oppose it against all odds.

VI - "Perfect agreement with the Marshal

But another cause of anarchy or wilful confusion remained: it was the skilful identification between the Marshal's cause and that of Messrs. Laval, Doriot et al. The Maréchal remained at his post, as he had to, to spare France greater evils, incomparably greater evils. All the more reason to refuse to attribute any responsibility for the German party to the Maréchal and his national policy. They could not be confused, and that's why we tightened our defense of France alone around the Marshal, maintaining as closely as possible our distinction between the State of which he was the Head and the Government held by Laval. In the final months of the occupation, the word "Government" would perhaps not be found

once in our language.
L'État, l'État was the refrain; the Head of State was who we knew, and the tactic of public enemies was to capture his person and authority.
Laval, increasingly discredited by the Germans themselves, was gradually replaced by their Marcel Déat. They had forced him into his own ministry. The German problem was to make people believe that the Marshal was for Déat. But our problem was to show the opposite, and we showed it!
We showed it despite the censors, and our personal actions made it clear. I'm not just talking about the words that flew out the window; there are still written testimonies. On July 26, 1944, I was able to point out some of Déat's divisive maneuvers. The next day, I received this letter from his representative in Lyon:
Lyon, July 27, 1944.
Dear Mr. Déat
The press campaign against Marcel Déat, initiated by the Nouvelliste, continues with L'Action française which, having never understood that one could adopt a line of conduct other than its own, has nothing more urgent, in imitation of L'Humanité, than to methodically insult the people it takes to task.
I know that when you write, it gives your style a vigorous air, but you know very well that Marcel Déat is not a "miserable fisherman in troubled waters", that he likes to think clearly and to say so (and this is what certain Vichy circles reproach him for); that he is not either "an exploiter of public misfortunes" and that he is leading an exhausting struggle to try to reduce these misfortunes which you have only been concerned with incantations (?) and exhortations (?). The only question is whether he understands France's interests differently from you. All that remains is to prove that his is not the same as yours. And if, as a token of your sincerity, you like to recall the time the Republic made you spend in prison, M. Déat could (but he has other things to worry about) recall that he risks his life every day to be sincere. The attacks he escaped prove it.
You move on to the question of Mr. Déat's holding both his portfolio and the management of L'Œuvre. No higher virtue has earned Mr. Déat "this exorbitant privilege". But, as a journalist, I hope you're informed about this, and that you know that Mr. Déat had renounced L'Œuvre when he became a minister, but given that many of the promises made to him on his entry into the Ministry had also been betrayed (!!!!), he didn't feel he had to keep his promise with regard to his activity as a journalist. So this is not an exercise of privilege, but a response.
Meanwhile, without seeming to attach any importance to it, you call Mr. Déat a "dissident minister". That's the purpose of your paper and that of Le Nouvel Liste: to make Mr. Déat look like a dissident. As I assume you are acting in good faith until proven otherwise, let me inform you of this point.
If, above, I said "to pass off", it's because it's not. The most perfect agreement probably does not exist between Messrs. Laval and Déat, on the subject of domestic policy. And the trick is to make it look like it's about foreign policy, which it's not. But he is not alone, and ministers such as Messrs Bichelonne and Bonnard have taken a position identical to his own. What's more, he is in perfect agreement with the Marshal. In the past, good souls had portrayed M. Déat as a bogeyman to the Maréchal. But, as there is always a way of getting along between people of good faith, the ice was broken at the first meeting and, following the assassination of M. Philippe Henriot, a manifesto was drawn up by journalists and politicians from Paris, by those whose state of mind you detest. This manifesto, presented by Admiral Platon to the Marshal, was approved by the latter. There is indeed a split between Paris and Vichy. But apart from the fact that it was nearly four years ago, the Marshal was in complete agreement with Paris's demands.
What's more, is it divisive not to accept Vichy's shortcomings, and only from the point of view of domestic policy, when it is precisely these shortcomings that are creating effervescence and disunity?

Yours sincerely
The Departmental Secretary.
Perfect agreement with the Marshal" was Déat's great claim! That's what he wanted to show off to the Germans, but also the great slander! My information was reliable. On July 31, as soon as I had his letter, I wrote back to Déat's departmental secretary:
Sir,
I have received your letter of July 27, 1944.
I was aware of the information you wanted to give me.
It was part of the instructions given by M. Marcel Déat to his faction. You would be wise not to be fooled by them; they are stories.
You're complaining about insults to your Déat! You've come at the wrong time, Monsieur. If you read L'Œuvre more carefully, or if you remembered it better, you wouldn't be unaware that Mr. Déat has never stopped insulting, defaming and slandering me for the past four years; that, because I was prosecuted, he has fled from court to court since 1941; and that, in 1944, when a material cause (the death of my lawyer) prevented me from attending his appeal, he wrote falsely that I was running away from him.
It's up to you, Sir, to believe that Marcel Déat understands French interests in 1944 better than I do. What is certain is that I understood it better than he did in 1938, when he was the most frenzied, the most enraged, the most systematic sectarian of England 43 . But do you know? And do you also know what M. Déat's early beginnings were? As a teenager? After this crime 44 , a normal man would have gone into hiding.
But criminals have never been so shy.
Monsieur Déat is a public menace, and I will not cease to denounce him.
Please accept, Sir, my most distinguished greetings.
Signed: Charles Maurras.
It seemed to me that "the instructions given by Marcel Déat to his faction" went beyond the realm of private correspondence and even press polemics. I sent a copy of the two preceding letters to Vichy and, by return of post, received express and formal confirmation of what I had been thinking. Mr. Déat had boasted to his faction; I was told that Mr. Déat had claimed a credit he didn't have and that, in reality, the Maréchal hardly knew him and had no contact with him whatsoever. I made this truth known to Déat's supporters in Lyon. I don't know what they did, but I did my duty.
Thus, in July 1944, our violent accusations against Mr. Déat and his followers continued. They continued later too! On August 8, we wrote again about this friend of the enemy and his foreign policy :
... all measures are outdated by the charlatan who has just laid down the principle that before being a State, before being itself, this State must have a foreign policy. That before it has built up a sufficiently conscious, resistant, active and effective force, it must have drawn up, in black and white, the program of its choice for external relations with its neighbors! Rather than exclaiming, let's understand.
The olibrius from whom I borrow this powerful view is a regular, a professional in electoral and parliamentary matters. It tears his heart out when we tell him that Parliament and elections have failed to kill France in a hundred and fifty years (I remind Déat of the invasions suffered by Democracy since 1789: 1792, 1793, 1814, 1815, 1870, 1914, 1940). He has created a kind of monster, which he calls his doctrine, according to which the European revolution, while being the opposite of the revolution of 1789, is nonetheless identical to it in essence. Democracy, liberalism, Jacobinism, Jewry and the voting box are secretly as dear to him as the revolution to which he (like all sharp-tongued nullities) owes his social ascent; consequently, a state and its politics are incomprehensible to him if they lack a program to post on walls and put to party votes.

Don't tell him that foreign states don't display anything at all; that they have their policies, that they keep them secret, and, like gamblers, clutch their cards to their chests. The poor man wouldn't understand, he couldn't understand. It is necessary, he says, he cries out, that France, instead of choosing itself and following its interests as events dictate, should choose "a destiny among the attractions of empires", on pain of breaking up and "tending to nothingness". France must proceed like a "leader of partisans", who groups them behind him by asserting his plan of action, with the promise and reward he attaches to it! Attitude, cockade, plume, it's the fireman's parade. By saying out loud what we intend to do to a world that does without saying, we'll solve all our problems; by playing all our cards, we'll save them.

Any of the great workers in the creation and growth of our homeland would have been astonished to read this nonsense. They would have wondered how it was possible to subordinate being to action, and spoken, shouted political action to just plain action. This program of gambits and declamations would certainly have stunned them. They would have been stunned. But, on the other hand, Déat would have understood nothing of their astonishment. No more than he understands when the obvious is put before his eyes. Is it impossible for him to see them? I've just said it, and I've said why.

Charles Maurras.

As you can see, those who favored the enemy's enterprise had to deal with us right to the end. We spared them neither the reasonable objection nor the flogging brocade. We never stopped standing up to them and denouncing them as the worst perpetrators of French anarchy, debacle and disaster.

How, then, was it possible to reproach us, for a single moment, even with lip service, for having "favored the enemy's ventures?" On the contrary, we attacked, criticized and thwarted them all the time. Those who favored them were our mortal enemies. We never stopped denouncing them, and when we couldn't do so openly, it was, as with M. Laval, by covering up and avoiding, at all costs, allowing ourselves to be compromised with him. Mr. Laval, the official head of the French government, was treated as a suspect because we knew him, and wanted it known that we knew him, to be the unofficial representative that Germany had placed between itself and the Marshal.

Our way of helping the enemy's schemes consisted in thwarting them and, when that wasn't possible, making them known and denouncing them. So, as soon as we learned of the disgraceful treatment meted out to the Marshal by the Germans, when they forced their way into his residence, violated his house, broke into his study and bedroom, before taking him captive to Germany, we hastened to publish it, and, as the Censorship was opposed to it, to circulate sheets reporting the facts, at the same time as advising all our friends to repeat it by word of mouth. As this was a month after the arrest and detention of Maurice Pujo and Georges Calzant at Fort Montluc, we knew what would happen to us if we indiscreetly spoke out. That didn't stop us any more than at any other time in our political action.

Interview with American journalists Arrest

It's sad to have to say: what the Gestapo didn't dare repress, the French police did!

I'm reporting the facts here; I know them better than anyone.

On Monday September 4, my collaborator Auphan came to tell me that four journalists attached to the American army, which had just entered Lyon, wanted to have a conversation with me and ask me to comment on events. Although hidden in Lyon, because of the Communists, I made myself available to these overseas colleagues. I was told that this would let people know I was still in town, even though they thought I'd left. The duty to inform the American people far outweighed such concerns for personal safety. An hour later, I was at my home on Franklin Street. Our colleagues joined me, and the conversation began.

They asked me the following questions, in the order in which they had put them, according to the text I had preserved:

1. In your opinion, what kind of government will the France of the future have?
2. Do you believe that a monarchy is still possible in France?
3. Was the Vichy government really pro-German?
4. Do you think there's a chance of civil war in France?
5. What is your opinion of American policy towards the Vichy government?
6. What are your personal plans for the future?
7. Is there anything in particular you would like to say to the American public to express your political position?

As soon as I had read the questionnaire, I asked my interlocutors to allow me to reverse the order and answer first about the Vichy government.

Vichy Government, that is, as they agreed, the Marshal. Then I protested with all my might that it was slanderous to believe him pro-Boche. No, the Maréchal was not pro-German, he never had been. And I gave all the superabundant proof I possessed. I showed, as Pujo had before his fellow inmates at Montluc, that the Maréchal had always been the most resistant of the French, the very embodiment of resistance, since he had never wanted to cede anything to Germany beyond the terms of the armistice, If he had accepted, out of patriotism, so many avenges and outrages, if he had suffered men like Laval and Déat, it was to save his country from greater calamities.

I knew that my interlocutors were in possession of typewritten sheets bearing :

1. the Marshal's Message to France ;
2. his letter of protest to Hitler;
3. an hour-by-hour account of the outrages he had suffered at the hands of the Germans on August 20.

I contented myself with showing that these documents, while they clearly manifested Germany's policy towards the Marshal, also contained, sanctioned and solemnized the Marshal's policy towards the occupying forces alone in France.

While replying to our colleagues on their other questions in the way that is easy to imagine, I must have shown a certain animation on this one, for the editor of the Times said to Auphan, when they had left me: "He's lively, the old man!" My insistence had struck him.

Thanks to me, the martyrdom inflicted on the Marshal by Germany became known in America. Thanks to me, the world will not have been able to believe that, at the head of the French State from 1940 to 1944, there was nothing but complacency before the enemy. The cause of the leader who held the flag will have been distinguished from those who betrayed him. Whatever would have helped the cause of the occupying forces and their propaganda, i.e. the fable of their agreement with the Marshal and the good Frenchmen who followed him, that fable was dispelled, thanks to us.

How can I be blamed for having favored what we, on the contrary, fought, thwarted, demolished, literally annulled!

But it's not over yet, there's an epilogue, and a beautiful one!

A quarter of an hour after the Americans, I once again left my apartment on rue Franklin to return to a lesser-known retreat, where I spent the following Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. But on Friday September 8th, at half past eight in the evening, my colleague Auphan rang the doorbell. Auphan rang the doorbell, followed by several policemen. These gentlemen had told him that the Commissaire de la République in Lyon had something to tell me about the American intervention.

I felt that the government might have an interest in hearing from me. So I made no effort to follow my visitors, took my cane and my hat, and went downstairs with no luggage other than my overcoat. My two colleagues and friends Pujo and Auphan went down with me.

The policemen were armed to the teeth. I joked with them. They told me it was for the Communists, in

case we were attacked.
We arrived at the Prefecture. The Commissaire de la République, M. Yves Farge, was, we were told, in conference with the military authorities. He would receive us during the night or the following morning. We spent the night on three chairs. Auphan and I were asked for a written summary of the American intervention. We wrote it up immediately. The two documents were never found, it seems. Two or three hours after we had received them, we were notified of our arrest without any further reason.
And so this arrest, singular to say the least, found me, again and again, in action against Germany; and, again and again, very precisely in order to serve, to disadvantage the enemy's enterprise.
Let's recap
Everything that preceded the final act of September 1944, like our political activity in June, July and August, consisted in fighting Germany's kingpin, Marcel Déat, who had always wanted France to fight alongside Germany.
"Germany won't wait forever, it won't wait for long", he wrote on January 11, 1943, the same Déat who, in June 1944, wanted France to assist Germany in the battle of Normandy.
To thwart this agent of the enemy, we did everything in our power.
In previous seasons and years, for example, we had endeavored to uphold the Marshal's two great refusals: no French mobilization in the service of Germany, and no declaration of war on England.
And they dare to accuse us of any agreement with the enemy!
Let's go back a bit further and see:

- as early as 1939, we were violently opposed to the war the enemy wanted to declare;
- we spoke out strongly in favor of the armistice of salvation, against the armistice of treason;
- and, as soon as the armistice was signed, we took a firm and clear stand against the German faction in Vichy and Paris ;
- and likewise at Montoire, against all false interpretations contrary to the Marshal's twofold instruction: follow me, don't overtake me;
- we who hunted down Laval around the Marshal, in front of the Marshal himself;
- we who fought a four-year war against Parisian defectors from French patriotism;
- we who have opposed collaborationism, its orators, propagators and lecturers on every occasion, the fable of the "good German Europe", a fable supported by the Paris press and the German newspaper from Lyon, L'Effort, but which L'Action Française discussed and ridiculed every day, and the other Kraut fable of the Eastern Crusade, attacked in L'Action Française to the great fury of the Doriotists, and which I also discussed against M. Bonnefoy in front of all our confreres. Bonnefoy in front of all our colleagues in Lyon;
- we who had attacked and continued to attack this anti-French nonsense to better support, buttress and consolidate the Maréchal's resistance.

For the Maréchal was the resistance fighter par excellence; even when he seemed to give way on a few personal issues, he remained all the more firm on principles and realities.
If he was obliged to recall Weygand from North Africa, he did not flinch at the affair for which Weygand carried the flag; he refused to accept Berlin's demands for Mediterranean support points such as Toulon and Bizerte.
The Marshal practiced and professed scrupulous respect for all the terms of the armistice as far as our former allies were concerned. When the latter forced him to defend himself against their violence, they were unable to extract from him anything he had forbidden himself by signing the armistice.
Such was his invariable, unchanging line.
Such was ours, following in his footsteps.

It is absurd and misleading to ignore it, or to ignore its radical opposition to German desires, passions and interests.

The rolled German: his confession

What would have happened if the Marshal had been less firm, or if he had not found in French opinion moral support like ours, on which his high authority could rely?

What would have happened if the Franco-German party, which he had always kept in check, had prevailed over the Marshal? if the Laval or Déat families had been able to grant Hitler the Mediterranean ports he was aiming for? if war had been declared on England and hundreds of thousands of young French peasants, dressed in green-gray, had been put at Hitler's disposal?

We don't calculate these eventualities. We no longer want to see these perils. They existed. It was possible to use the indignation caused to the French by the ruins and massacres of the bombings to move these new sectors of opinion.

Who said no, always no? The Marshal, and us following in the Marshal's footsteps. It's a resistance like any other. Less romantic, perhaps, but just as powerful, just as effective, just as valuable. But this resistance would not have been possible without a constant battle against the German press in Paris, Lyon, Marseille and elsewhere. This struggle had its risks. We didn't brag about it. But since everyone brags today, why not tell it like it is? The Marshal's final treatment shows that he was never on a bed of roses. As for us, not to mention the fact that the Gestapo sent Maurice Pujo and Georges Calzant where they belonged, we shouldn't forget the more or less revolutionary gangs assembled in Paris by Déat and others, who threatened us with their visits. Denounced daily by the press, this faithful resistance had the virtue of eluding the Boche himself to some extent, thanks to the simple finesse of the French game.

The Kraut has been surprised ever since! Among the papers abandoned by the Propaganda-Staffel, we found a brochure, dated November-December 1943, entitled Spiegel der Franzosischen Presse (Mirror of the French Press). Its origin is unmistakable, and it bears the subtitle "Report of the Press Group of the Propaganda Section in France". The document is confidential; at the top of the cover, it states "Recipients are responsible for the preservation and destruction of numbered copies" and "Confidential, for service use only".

The great interest of the document is that it establishes the Germans' opinion of L'Action française, not for their propaganda, but for what their services should think of L'Action française. The document, of which we have a photograph, sheds light on the Germanophile press's attacks on us. It is of the utmost importance.

Here is a passage from the article by Sonderführer A. Thiersch's article on L'Action française:

Between the lines. - A look at the press in the southern zone

The passive resistance to New Europe highlighted in the above-mentioned texts became opposition in a sheet of paper whose violence had long since taken a special place in the French press, the royalist Action française. Today, Charles Maurras is undoubtedly full of vehement words against England, Moscow and Jewry; but all his arguments against these powers are also directed against Germany and Europe, as they are linked to the postulate of France's political and spiritual autarky, which Maurras asserts day after day with the utmost intransigence. "France, France alone" is the motto that graces the newspaper's headlines every day, and the future will undoubtedly remember, as a sign of extraordinary tolerance (boche, oh la, la!), the fact that after fifty years of fighting Germany like no other, this man, who is credited with a decisive influence on the "wait-and-see" course of Vichy politics, was able to pursue his activities in a country occupied by the German army without being troubled.

France," wrote Maurras in L'Action française of September 24, 1941, "does not have to sacrifice itself for foreign interests, because the foreigner (especially Russia, England and America), by the force of things and because of the sacrifices he has made and continues to make to the war, is forced to think

above all of himself. It would be the most ridiculous of reveries to attribute to him any generous intentions; he must worry about his own existence, seek to survive unheard-of efforts... . Our so-called saviors and liberators are ferocious creditors... There is only one way to endure and to win, and that is the unshakeable will not to let ourselves be tricked or robbed by any enemy, old or new."
The reader would guess at once that the sentences are not aimed solely at the powers designated in brackets, even if the word "especially" did not appear.
This is the admission of our resistance and its patent. This is an admission of the usefulness of the French administrative apparatus interposed by the Marshal's armistice, the saving armistice; there was still a way to slip through the cracks of the occupation. But it was also an admission of the foolishness of the Boche, deceived, tricked and duped by us. Our intentions had been fulfilled, our goals achieved, every time that, on one point or another, we had thwarted their enemy's enterprise.
And they dare to accuse us of having served them!
I won't be fooled
Mr. Chairman,
Gentlemen of the jury,
Mr. Avocat de la République,
I will not be fooled by this accusation.
I let you know, in my written brief, how I interpret it.
I owe it to you, I owe it to myself, to reiterate it in person.
No one familiar with contemporary literature will contradict me if I assert that there is no French writer who, throughout his career, has manifested, to the same degree as yours truly, a similar abhorrence of the German spirit and German domination. The material fact remains uncontested until June 1940; and the accusation is that then, at the age of seventy-two, I changed my thoughts, my mind and my language! She would have to explain this change of heart.
Where did it come from?
Was it the kindness of the Germans to me?
Their advances?
Their promises?
I had energetically opposed the Parisian clan of friends of Germany.
With the approach of the German armies (June 1940), I left Paris to continue freely publishing French thought.
As soon as I was certain that Paris would not be defended, we took refuge in Poitiers.
I left this hospitable town as soon as it came under German threat.
When they arrived in Paris on the third day, the Germans had sealed off my personal residences in rue de Verneuil and rue de Bourgogne.
On rue du Boccador, they looted and ransacked the headquarters of L'Action française, of which Maurice Pujo and I are directors. At first, the move was gradual, and after two years, when they appropriated our premises, they took everything that remained for unknown destinations: collections, registers, furniture, not forgetting the books, trinkets, autographs, relics and precious souvenirs that filled my personal cabinet, among others.
During these four years, the Germans banned and hunted down my newspaper throughout their northern zone. Anyone holding an issue was punished; holding a packet of it meant severe penalties.
For over four years, the Germans have held my nephew and adopted son, Lieutenant Jacques Maurras, prisoner. Despite the offers and temptations he has been subjected to, this brave child has refused to become a free worker with them; my last will and testament will mention him on the agenda of L'Action française because of this very French refusal.

In Martigues, the Germans occupied my house, furrowed my garden with their trenches and mined my hill. I was offered an indemnity, which I refused, not wanting to take Boche money or, if the indemnity was French, to add, however little, a burden to my country.
In Limoges, the only signs of their "Kommandantur" affixed to the hotel I lived in made me leave it.
In Lyon, it was the Germans who chased me from hotel to hotel. Before reducing me to living in a furnished apartment, one of their raids on the "Grand Nouvel Hôtel" had torn off the knot of tricolored ribbons that decorated a beautiful picture of Strasbourg cathedral above my work table.
Also in Lyon, our good friends the Miliciens requisitioned part of the apartment we had rented at Le Progrès; and again in Lyon, the Germans imprisoned my admirable co-director, co-detainee, co-defendant Maurice Pujo and my dear colleague Georges Calzant for nineteen days at Fort Montluc.
Finally, in Lyon, as a farewell bouquet, the blast from the bomb destined to blow up one of your bridges almost killed Maurice Pujo and me... .
Really, Mr. President, Members of the Jury, Counsel for the Republic, is this the list of benefits that could have turned me in the German direction and led me to favor them in their undertakings?
It's an absurdity that we won't support.
So, what do you say?
Well, I propose a reasonable explanation. The accusations levelled at me are based on the following:
The long series of my campaigns against German influence in France, the long list of my warnings to the French people, this series of warnings predating even the birth of L'Action française and stretching over a space of more than fifty years, form a body of memories and a monument of services that can be seen from afar.
It can be seen from far enough away to hinder those who campaigned for me not to be listened to, those who didn't want to or didn't know how to arm, arm, arm, those who wanted - and here are the real traitors, here is the real intelligence with the enemy - those who wanted, I say, to wage this war after they had disarmed us.
French people who meet me like to say: "Ah, what a pity we didn't listen to you, we wouldn't be where we are today!
The same French people can and should say to my accusers: "We are here because of you. What a misfortune it is that we've sold you out!
So my record of service is a living reproach to my accusers. So they tried to reverse the roles. They set out to transfer to themselves, to their own account, they, former deniers of the Patrie, former disarmers of France, former blasters of a lost war, the merit and honor of my double campaigns for peace and for armaments, for the defense of the Nation and for the victory of the Patrie.
The national sentiment these gentlemen display today can be misleading about their past. I'm not disputing the sincerity of their patriotism, but it's recent. It only arose after the misfortunes we had announced, foreseen, predicted and wanted to prevent had come to an end. It took defeat after defeat, it took four years of tyrannical occupation to awaken in good French hearts the ideas, the lights that anti-patriotism and anti-militarism had obscured. The French heart, or good heart, the French blood, or good blood, finally felt that there can be no quiet, secure private life without a strong national life and a powerful national spirit. The house needs the rampart. There are no social classes, no happy, established, lasting social bodies, without the Rampart belt. The work of peaceful men is always exposed to the looting of war, to aggression, to invasion, if a solid Rampart does not protect them. In the past, France's rampart was guaranteed by the monarchy. Democracy has failed to maintain it. In the hundred and fifty years before democracy, we had not been invaded once. Since then, and I shall repeat this until I die, since then, under new governments, the great invasion, the deep invasion, has bitten our territory seven times: in 1792 and 1793, in 1814, in 1815, in 1870, in 1914, in 1940. Had those who are so justifiably

irritated by the German occupation thought about it, had they even conceived of it before suffering it? Well, that's what I was always thinking about: the possible attack, the possible invasion, the necessary defense against these invasions, the threat of which is always hanging over us.
That's what we never, or almost never, thought about, except in the heat of the moment. This gives me the right to say that, if anything was done to favor the foreigner's enterprise, it was indeed through this negligence, this unforeseeability, this blindness, against which I have fought so hard!
We favored and served the German enemy by refusing to foresee the war he was preparing.
We both favored and served him by declaring war on him in a haphazard fashion.
We served Hitler by declaring a war he needed, the same war Émile Ollivier had declared on Bismarck in 1870.
Throughout the first half of 1939, I kept writing:
- Daladier! Daladier! your name, spelled Daladié in our Provençal, means wild olive tree. Beware of homonyms. Beware of the stars. The stars say that Émile Ollivier, being a son of Marseille, may draw into his destiny a son of Carpentras like you.
Daladier and his ilk served the enemy by not listening to me, when I said: Let's arm!
We served the enemy by doing nothing of what we said.
They served the enemy by doing everything we advised against.
All the days leading up to the fatal declaration, we were saying to Daladier:
- What can you do for Poland? You can do nothing!
He didn't answer, but he was stubborn with his party. And so they fell into the trap set for them, even though it was clearly visible! We loved Poland, we hated Germany, much more than Daladier loved the one and hated the other. But we believed that before going to war, we had to know our strengths and the strengths of the enemy; the French people must not be led to the slaughter like poor cattle. We were serving the enemy when we had such a degraded idea of the French multitude!
And every day we repeated that it was madness to launch an offensive war when, for years, we had only planned and organized a defensive military apparatus. We were doing the enemy a powerful service, helping him to achieve victory by ignoring these objections of patriotism and reason. This is true treason. And the traitors are among you.
Oh, how I understand that those responsible for this hideous adventure cannot think of us without feeling ashamed of themselves!
And how I understand that they wish to pass on to me the responsibilities they feel weigh heavily upon them!
They'd love to think that when they thought the Germans were harmless, I made the same blunder they did. No doubt they would also be delighted to be able to say that our predictions of 1939 were vain and false. Unfortunately, they have been verified by the dark and tragic events which, although they have become memories, continue to plague us with their consequences.
So, all that's left for them to do is to persist in repeating the lie: I was right once, I've changed since then! At a time when everything was confirming my two parallel campaigns against Germany and democracy, I would have switched to the one of the two enemies I had fought the most... .
- But yes, you dare say, you were expressing your gratitude to Germany for having caused the downfall of democracy.
- That's another stupid thing to say!
If I could have wished for the downfall of democracy at the cost of the ruin of the Fatherland, would I have gone to so much trouble to overthrow democracy? All I'd have had to do was let it run its course, instead of trying to limit its damage by fighting it. It would have been enough to let it run where it ran of its own accord: to the disarmament, demilitarization and denationalization of France, which are the

direct routes, the vertical slopes to defeat and debacle! Instead of opposing this lost war with all my soul, I would have pushed for it, just as, in the same case, I should have pushed for other wars in 1936 and 1938, wars that I and my friends prevented, because we put France above all else.
And now, it's the men who sang Pottier's hymn, "Crosse en l'air et rompons les rangs", it's those who cried "folie des armements", it's those men who would like to stick their doctrines and actions in my face. That explains it! They want to smear their past and mine with their lies. But while I admire their impudence, I find them rather imprudent. There are evidences brighter than the sun. They won't come to terms with it easily, I promise them!
It's not the first time they've tried to manoeuvre me like this. This is the most shameless and crude attempt I've ever had to endure, but they've already tried to make me out to be someone else by saddling me with errors contrary to the spirit of my life, the heart of my thinking. In the social arena, where I have so often been portrayed as a "defender of the trusts" or a supporter of the economic liberalism that oppresses the people, as being in favor of doctrines that I have fought against for as long as I have existed. At the age of eighteen, I joined La Réforme sociale, the magazine founded by the great Frédéric Le Play, author of the famous survey of European workers that dominated his century. I was thirty-five when I wrote my Avenir de l'Intel ligence, an indictment of the plutocracy you call capitalism. At the age of forty, during the inhuman repression of the Draveil-Vigneux riots, I took the side of the working people betrayed by the republican bourgeoisie in L'Action française, and overwhelmed Clemenceau (in his first ministry) with scathing invectives, after which patriotic trade unionists, led by our friend Émile Janvion, hung the bust of the Republic on the façade of the Bourse du Travail. At the same time, I was developing a doctrinal campaign on the need to incorporate the proletariat into society, in the words of my master Auguste Comte, to give workers in large-scale industry serious guarantees that would form part of the national statute. In these studies, collected in my large Political and Critical Dictionary, I showed that, while paternalism was necessary, it was not sufficient, and I responded to those young bourgeois men and women who, quite rightly, praised the kindness, generosity, the philanthropy of their fathers or husbands towards the workers in their industries, that these good bosses were right, but that they were not eternal, could be replaced by less good bosses, and that workers' rights had to be recognized and enshrined in law.
This was not an arbitrary choice of thought on my part. It was linked to my doctrine as a whole. Economic liberalism and the omnipotence of money are the scourge of the French Revolution. The reaction we were leading demanded that we begin by restoring humane conditions to national work and to French workers. Natural conditions, necessary conditions that old France had known. While we absolutely rejected the false mottos of liberty and equality, which are the seeds of anarchy, jealousy and hatred, we retained the precept of fraternity, a direct derivative of the idea of nation, which expresses a family bond, the state of birth common to all nationals. This social program stood, and it stood at the heart of our policy. Well, every time we feared having to talk about it, we started by disguising it with a rare insolence.
I'll never forget the day when, before the Seine jury, the foul murderer of a hero of the 1914 war, the French Decius, our dear and great Marius Plateau, a policewoman, Germaine Berton, dared to call me the greatest enemy of the proletariat. I retorted, as you can imagine! I threw back in her face what I've just said again today. But the next day, all the unofficial newspapers reproduced the insult and the lie, without saying a word, a single word, about the rectification. But why? What was the point? The interest, common to our revolutionary and bourgeois democrats alike, of keeping the working people well away from their true friends, their disinterested friends, their devoted friends! The French worker, intelligent, ardent, always ready to march, constituted a precious electoral and parliamentary "value", and the parties of the left and far-left made it their preserve. We couldn't let our sincere words penetrate

to the workers; we had to establish a watertight partition between the workers and ourselves. To achieve this, we used, above all, anti-patriotism and anti-militarism, with which we had saturated them; for, while the German worker, the English worker, the American worker, the Italian worker, were brought up in the respect and faith of their Patria, the French worker, weaned on this natural sap, met and collided with an element in our nationalism which was to drive him away from us.
The representatives who had imposed themselves on him did what they could to express their indifference to the idea of the Patrie. Thirty years ago, it was commonly said that it would be better to become German than to let the children of France spend three years in barracks. In the middle of the 19141918 war, so-called leaders of the French proletariat went to Kienthal to talk about the white peace! When we wanted to lead the war to victory, we were labeled as drinkers of workers' blood!
These slanderous precautions didn't always dispel any risk of contact between us and the workers. There was only one possible remedy, the great, the beautiful, the decisive: to distort and disfigure the just and fraternal doctrine that was ours, and to impute to us the one we had always fought against.
Under cover of these lies, the evil shepherds of social democracy could happily sit down at the table of big business; they became lawyers for big firms or begged their children for lucrative positions with the regime's groper, the notorious Oustric, for example.
As you can see, innocent workers' suffrage was a good thing! Its profiteers had a growing interest, having captured it, in retaining it. So they imputed their practices to us and distorted our ideas. Later, when a so-called Christian democratic wing formed on the right flank of the socialist party, the same interest played out to play out the same lies; the orators and writers of this faction could not lose sight of the old motto of their electoral tours: "I put my conscience in a drawer, I'll take it back when I come back!" Did they ever find it? Just last spring, in Switzerland, a sectarian newspaper published in Fribourg gave what it called Maurrassism the odious color of an anti-social, anti-worker, anti-proletarian spirit. Only this time, the slander fell on a thoughtful and, what's more, well-informed readership in the Vaud region. The editors of Lausanne's L'Action spontaneously re-established the truth, as we have just heard it, and ended the correction by saying that they were submitting it "to the appreciation of honest people on the right and left". A fine thought, but one that needs to be complemented by this truth of experience: there's no honesty in politicians when they're threatened in their daily bread. With them, you can expect anything.
The politicians who were in office at the time of the immense ruin of the Patrie, the politicians who brought about this ruin, either through malice or clumsiness or incapacity, today feel that it would be happy, useful, convenient and comfortable to have me taken for them and to be taken for myself. This would give them peace of mind. Their liabilities, I repeat, bother them, and they would like to attribute them to me. My assets tempt them, and they want to appropriate them. Let me say again that I understand them. If only I could praise them! After all, in 1945 they occupy the same sad moral position as Emperor Napoleon III, his Minister of Foreign Affairs Gramont, his Prime Minister Ollivier and his Minister of War Marshal Lebœuf occupied after 1870. My position is that of the prudent and wise warners like M. Thiers, of the serious informers like Colonel Stoffel. Like those who wanted to prevent the Emperor from throwing himself on the outstretched sword of Moltke and Bismarck, I did what depended on me to divert our politicians from the sword held out by Hitler. No," they said, "it's not a sword, it's a card game. Hitler is bluffing. Hitler plays poker." They swooped in and skewered themselves, or rather skewered their country, which their advice deceived and lost. These are bad memories for these gentlemen. Calculate how pleasant it would be for the profiteers of the "headless woman" to say, backed by solemn rulings of popular justice: "It's not us! it's not us! It's not even the cat! It's Maurras!"
Well! Maurras doesn't take kindly to this. Perhaps they're already a little suspicious by now.

Oh, it's not that I have any particular desire to save my mortal old self!
At my age, life isn't much. Honor? I defy anyone to sully mine. Everything I've just said speaks volumes. Neither the most astonishing of arrests, nor more than four months in a rather tight prison, nor a few minutes of symbolic handcuffs, nor the Charentonnesque report of a degraded informant we'll tell you about, nor the charge that would like to be infamous but that falls on its authors, nothing can resist the peaceful ray of light I've just projected to you. Oh, I know what factions are, and what factious people can do in times of crisis and revolution. You can expect anything from them.
But what does it matter? For my part, I'm only interested in Truth, Justice and the Homeland.
Truth is. I defy anyone to seriously dispute either the whole or the smallest detail of what I've just said. I stand by the Truth.
Justice? It can't help smiling with bitter irony at the boute-feux of 1939, the cause of all our ills, Champetier de Ribes 45 for example, who wanted to exonerate their august shoulders from the appalling consequences of their management, in order to offload it onto someone who had warned them, one by one, of their misdeeds. I have no fear of Justice.
As for the Fatherland, I know what I owe it, but my filial respect prevents me from thinking that the name of one of its good servants should be erased from its bosom, or that it should be mixed up with unworthy contacts. The very rare errors of French history have always had the privilege of being compensated for by brilliant and generous rehabilitations. Even more than Truth and Justice, I am sure of the maternal affection of my homeland and the faithful remembrance of all true Frenchmen.
I'll sit down quietly, having said what needed to be said and ready to respond to all the flat, more or less distorted stories you accuse me of.
Come then, false informers, false transcribers or bad readers of the clearest texts! Come, evil inventors of intentions that may well suit you, but are not worthy of me! Come messengers, servants, instruments of factions and factionalists! Come, false witnesses! I have my word ready on each and every one of you. Each one of you will receive the direct stream of Truth, the irresistible bursts of Justice, as a last surcease of services that, old and worn out, I will still be able to render to the motherland. Four months ago, I placed these audiences under two great invocations: Joan of Arc and André Chénier46.